Foiling
MAGAZINE

DAL RIATA
A SCOTTISH DOWNWINDER

NO DOWN DAYS
MOONA IN CAPE VERDE

FLOW STATE
SPOT TO SPOT IN TAHITI

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FREE WING

AIR V3

ALL-AROUND PERFORMANCE

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FREE WING
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Rider: **Victor Hayes**, Photographer: **Andre Magarao**, Location: **Tahiti, Spain**

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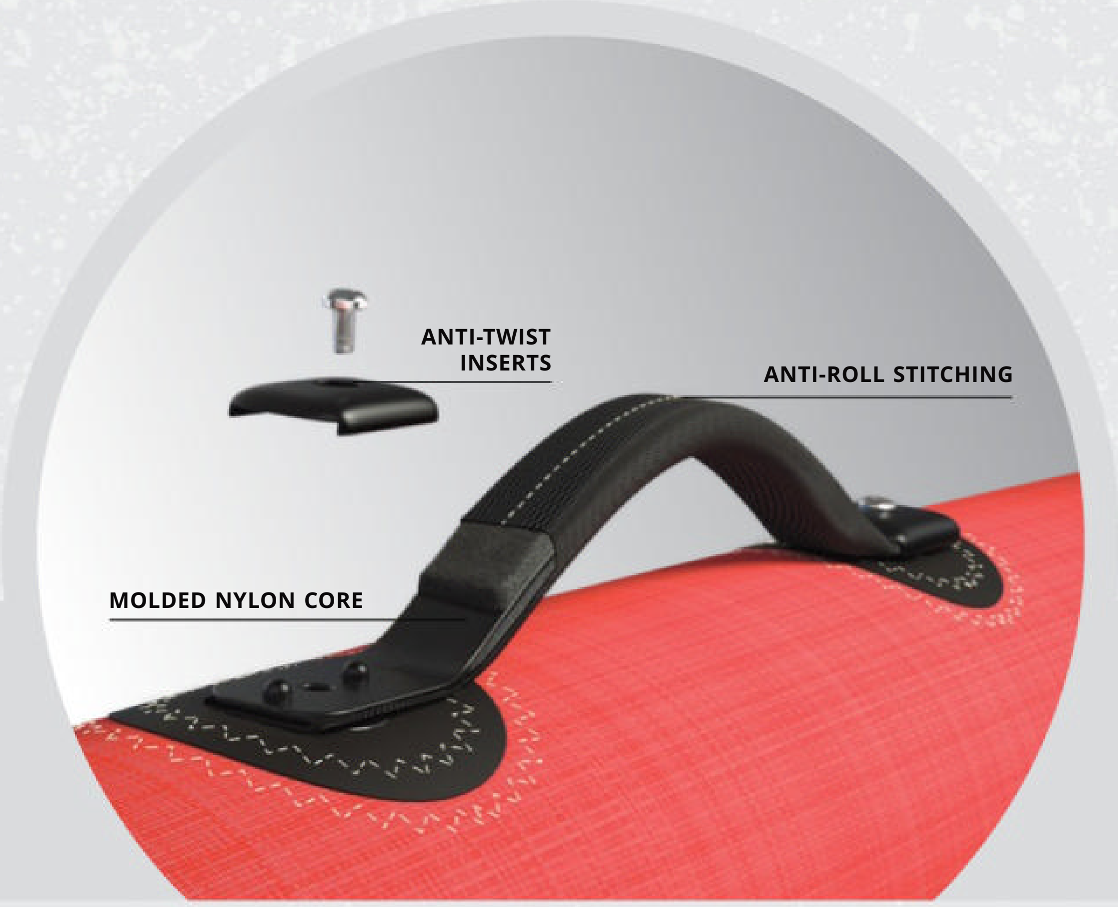
ANTI-TWIST
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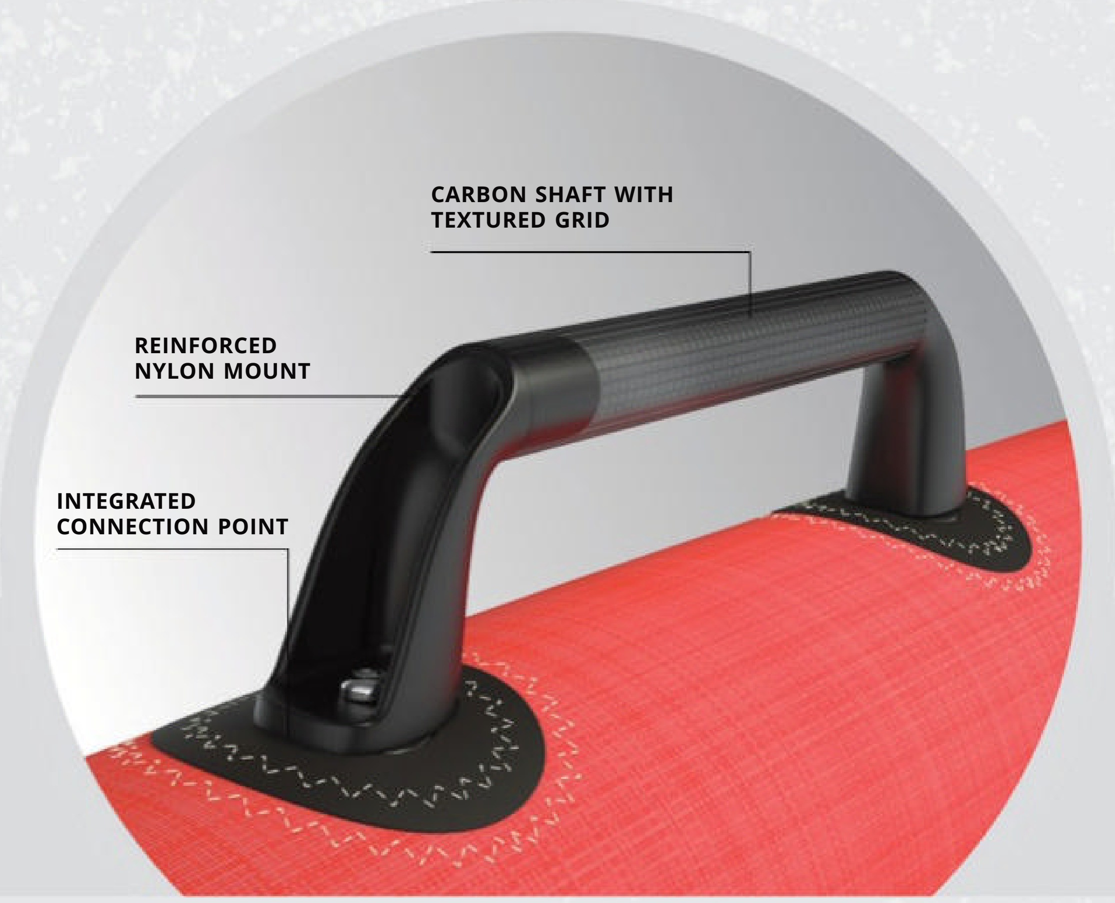
The Firm-Flex Handle offers a new level of stability and connectivity between the rider and the wing. Maximizing reactivity, this ergonomically molded soft handle provides extra comfort and grip.

**STANDARD ON THE FREEWING AIR V3*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REINFORCED
NYLON MOUNT
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CARBON
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ALL-AROUND FREERIDE

2 / 2.5 / 3 / 3.5 / 4 / 4.5 / 5 / 6 / 7

The wing that has helped define and shape the sport is now in its 3rd generation. Increased convex dihedral, refined air foil section and the new convex strut increase the efficiency and range, allowing you to further maximize the true potential of wingfoiling.

Keahi de Aboitiz

James Boulding

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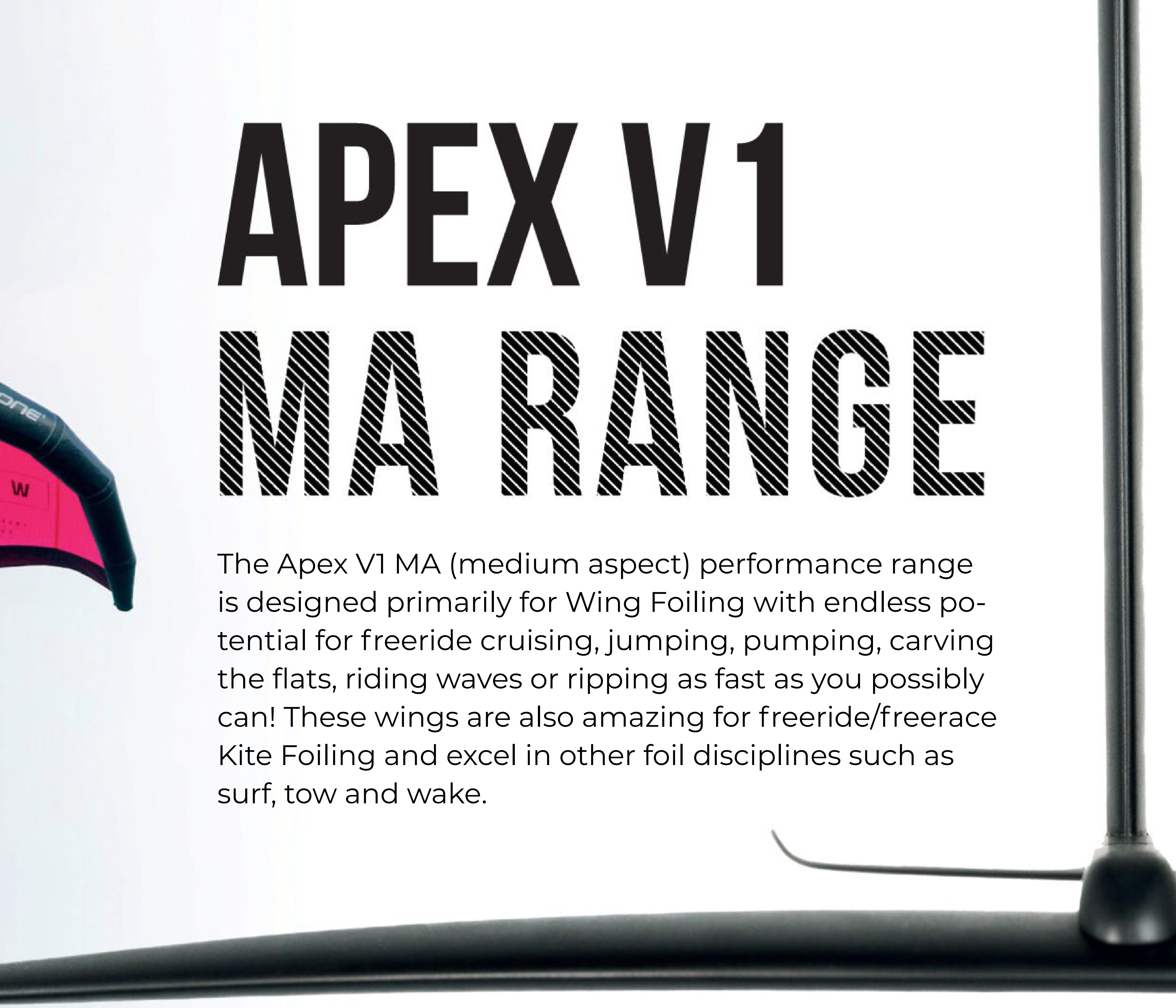

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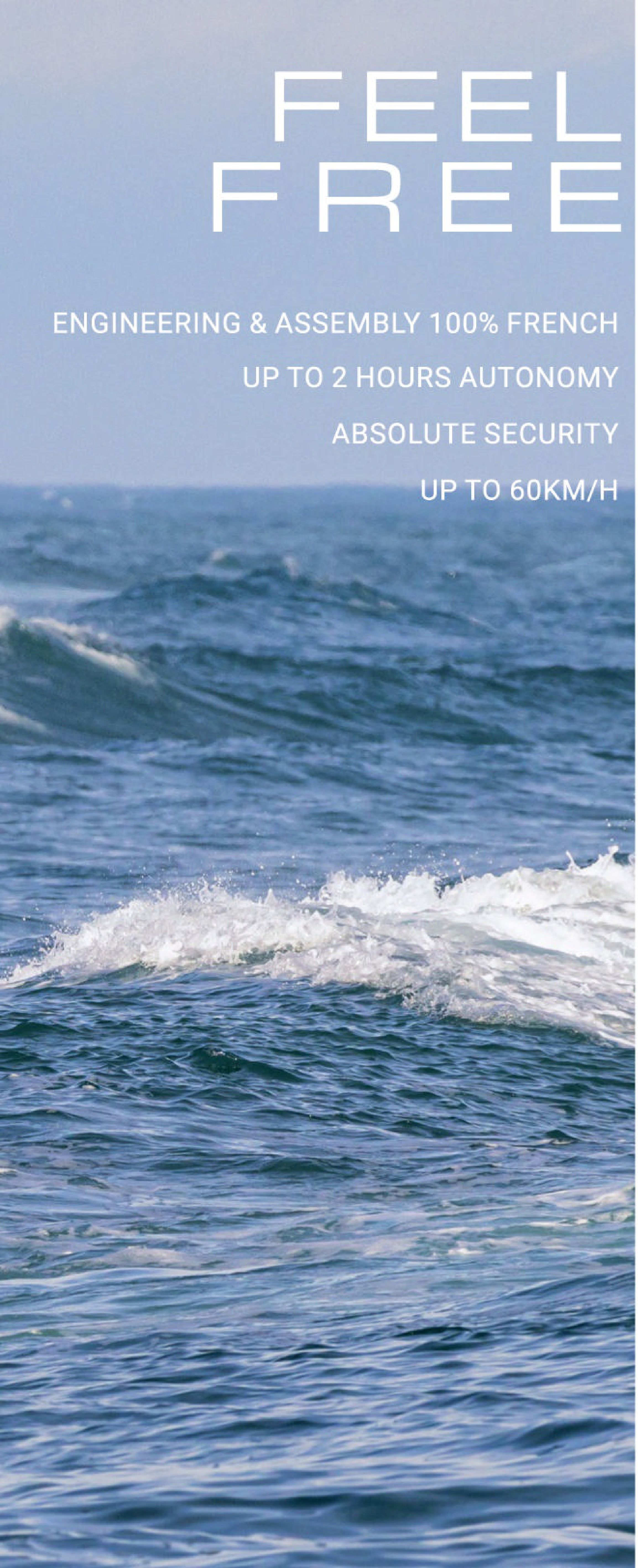

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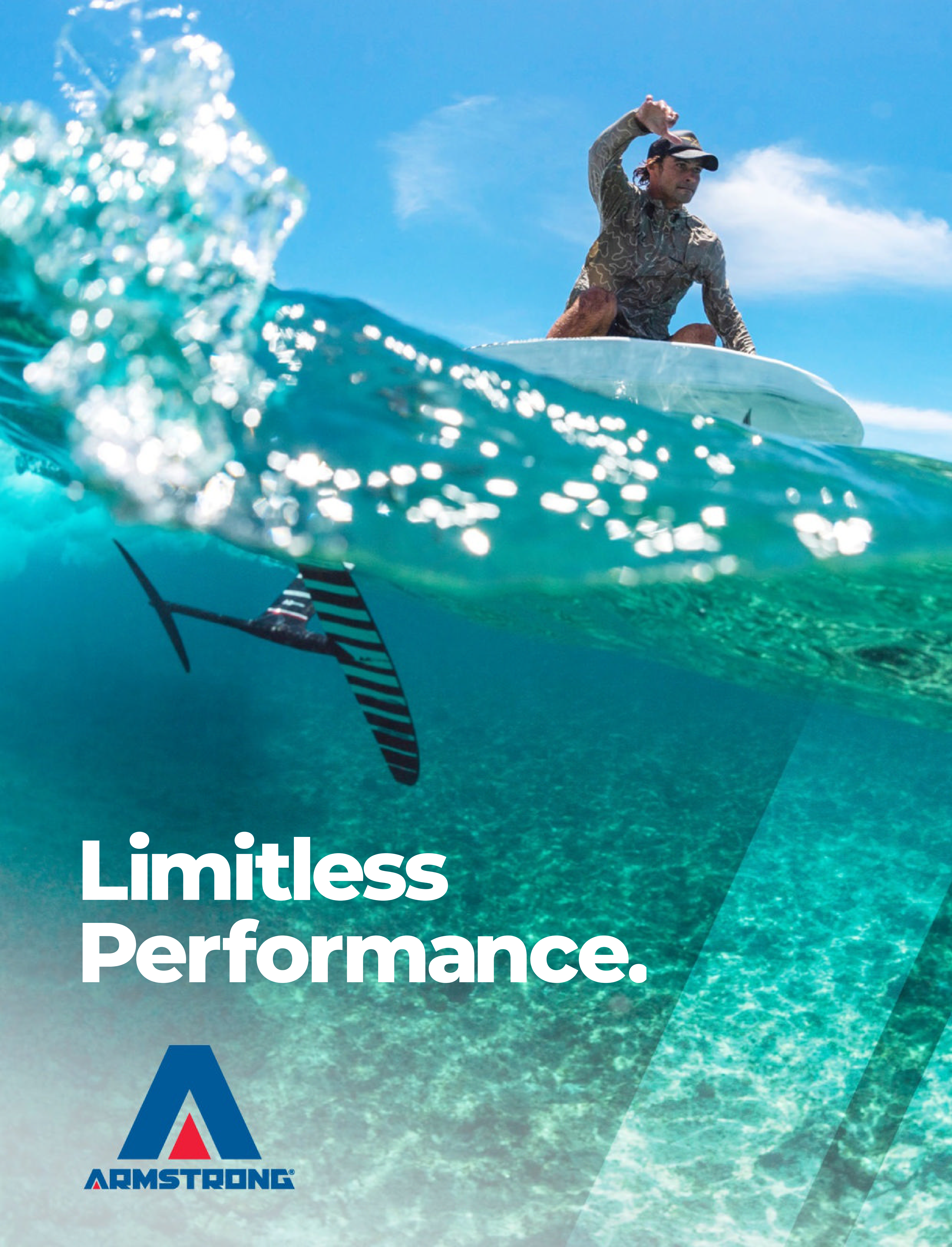
Rider: Xavi Corr. Photos: Sebastian Lang & Samuel Cardenas.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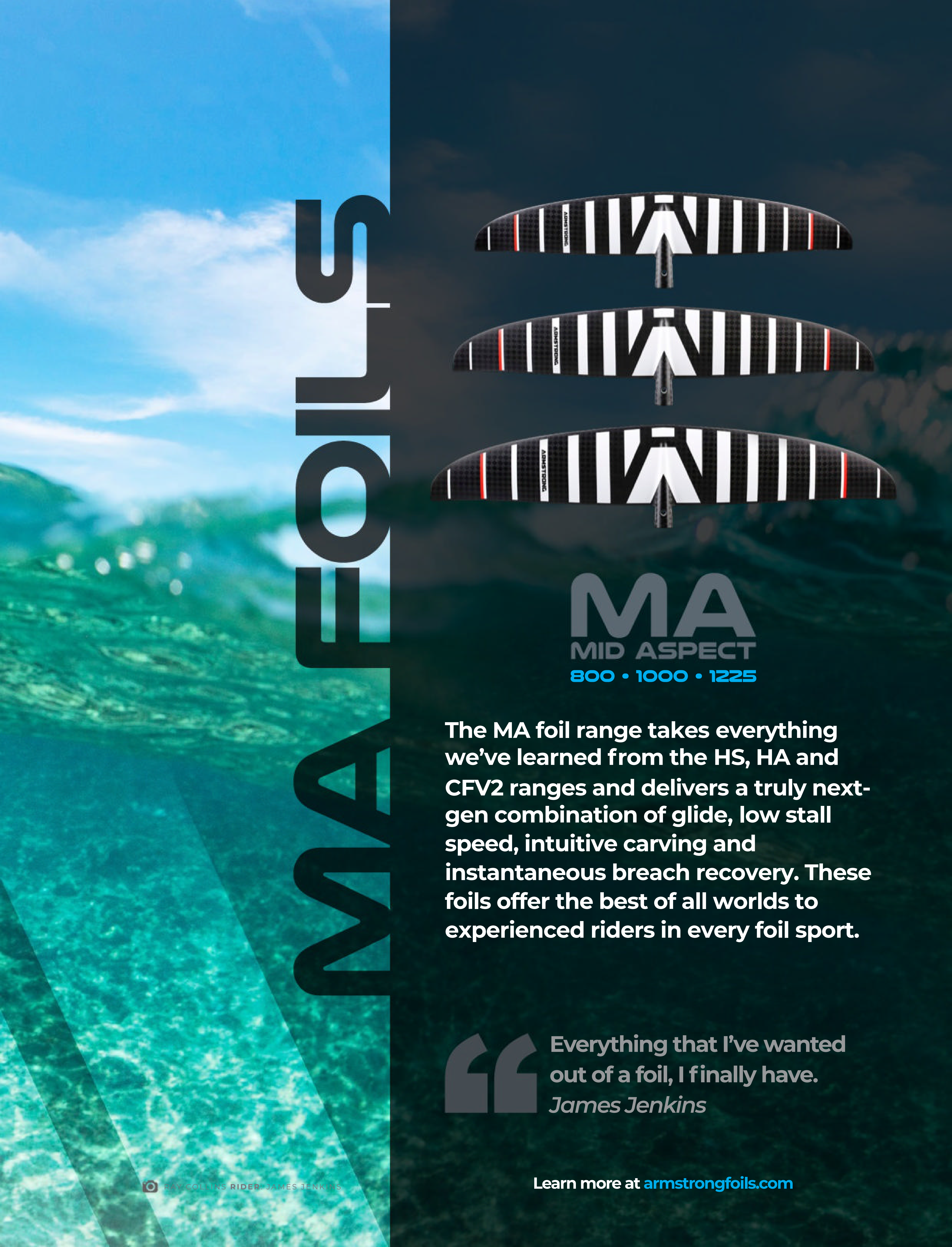

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James Jenkins

RAY COLLINS **RIDER:** JAMES JENKINS

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NORTH
NORTH
4.2

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THE FIJI FACTOR

As luck or fate would have it, two of the world's most high-profile surf foilers happened to be on Namotu Island at the same time. Thankfully, photographer Ray Collins was too...

106

THE EMERALD HIGHWAY

Henning Nockel tells the tale as the Duotone and Fanatic wing team set off for a team trip to the wild shores of Western Ireland which, it turned out, weren't as wild as they'd expected...

114

NO DOWN DAYS

Although planned as a kitesurf trip, a lucky last minute addition of a wing and foil meant that Moona Whyte had no worries when the swell didn't initially show up. And it meant even more fun when it did...

122

CARIBBEAN GLIDE

Nick Leason and friends spend a week skirting the stunning US and British Virgin Islands, making the most of the near limitless potential for foil adventures that surround these islands.

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The AFS team decamp to the Inner Hebrides on the west coast of Scotland, on a mission to film an epic downwind adventure. Ancient history, stormy weather and highland cows all feature...

136

ISLAND OF PLENTY

Bowien van der Linden eschews her usual substantive competitive wing quiver and packs light for some inshore exploration of the Greek island of Lefkada.

140

THREE SESSIONS THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

It turns out that years spent enjoying the wind and waves in other formats didn't bounce Philip Muller into the top league of downwind riders as he'd hoped it might. Here's what he learnt though...

144

FLOW STATE

Victor Hays returns to Tahiti after a certain pandemic cut short his previous trip. Accompanying him in the clear blue (but occasionally challenging) waters was photographer Andre Magarao...

150

THE SLEEPING GIANT

It's not all that often that the big wave spot of Belharra fully awakens. But when it does, it does so pretty dramatically. Riders Tom Constant and Matt Etxebarne departed Nazaré to go catch it...

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LEFT
Jesse Richman goes high and hard on the shoulder, giving us a good look at the brand new North Nova wing... Photo: Dayanidhi Das

COVER
When that "one more wave and I'm going in" is everything you could possibly wish it to be. Keahi strikes gold in CV. Photo: James Boulding

NORTH

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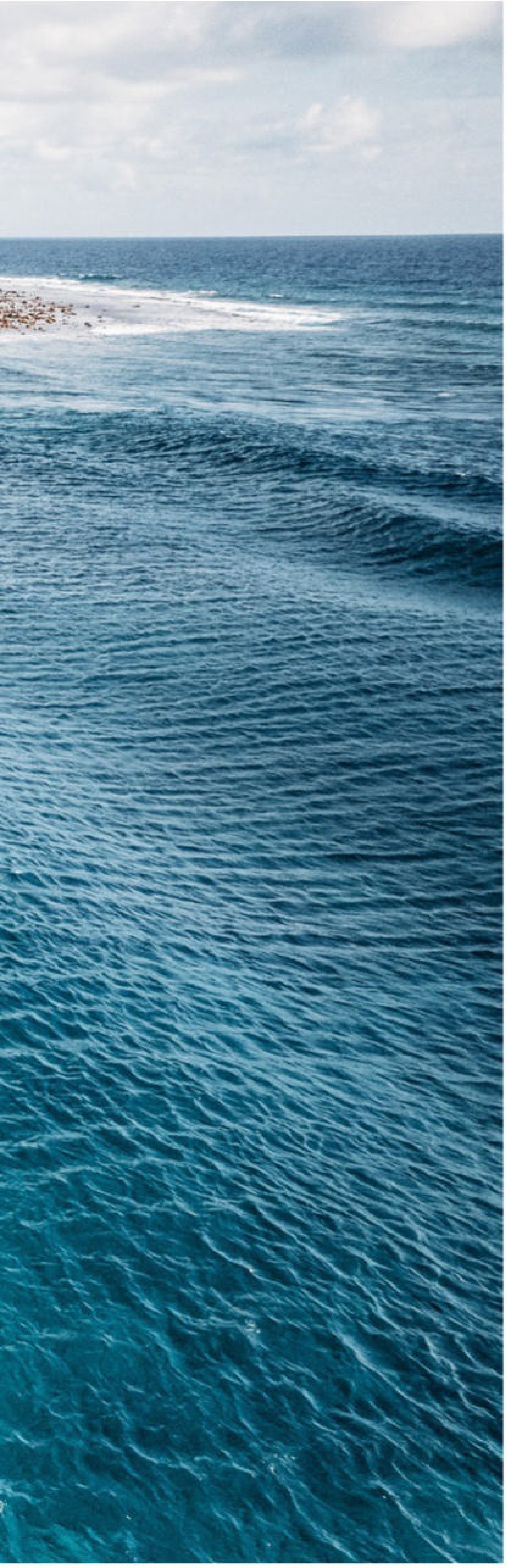
ABOVE
Ludo Dulou during filming of the movie “Hono”, enjoying the tidal interactions of an island pass, only accessible by sailboat. Photo: Tim McKenna



EDITORIAL

As I was having a proof of one of the early drafts of this edition of the magazine (amidst, I might add, my first bout of Coronavirus, plus talk of potential alien spacecraft in the news – it was a weird time to say the least) it occurred to me that a number of the many features within this issue involve islands, or at least the channels that surround them, or the surf that impacts them. I was particularly drawn to Ludo Dulou's description of his experience in the Tuamotus island chain, seen to the right left – riding the tidal bore that springs up between each land mass. At the same location he was able to foil in the surf, and get out on the wing too.

It got me thinking a little deeper about islands (through self-imposed isolation, I had plenty of time to do this) as popular locations to go foil. It's really no surprise that surf foiling, in its contemporary form, was born in the Hawaiian island chain. To a large extent, yes, this is because the place already had a huge water sport or water man/woman heritage, and it's that playful interaction between humans and their water-optimized toys that arguably gave rise to the sport in the first place. But zoom out further than that for the broader view, and to why those islands have become such hotbeds for water sport innovation and technical progress generally, let alone a proving ground for contemporary riders and gear – and the answer (one we can all relate to if we've visited such places) is a given: it's down to the quality and commonality of absolutely prime conditions that often occur amongst islands.

Islands – especially the smaller archipelagos – hold a huge amount of potential and promise when it comes to foiling. With 360 degree coastlines exposed to all manner of wind and swell conditions, deep channels with complex tidal interactions, and often steep offshore drop offs that allow open ocean swells to approach unhindered, the variety and rich pickings that can be found in such environments is pretty immense – something championed by Nick Leason in his recent boat trip through the Caribbean islands, which you can read about from page 122. Our ability to access spots on remote islands which might otherwise have remained untapped has also changed... You can now take your pick on how you want to enter these spots with a foil.

And, despite what our cover shot of Keahi de Aboitiz in Cape Verde might have you believe, islands are also some of the best places to head when you're starting out too. Calm waters, protected bays, variable setups and conditions, stable winds – there are multiple reasons that make islands an ideal destination for riders of all levels, and especially those who are looking to progress more quickly with their foil skillsets.

There is of course the extra factor that small island chains are almost universally beautiful places. Maybe that's subjective but I'm sticking to it... Your rocky sub-Arctic outcrop replete with bizarre wildlife and ominously dark water holds as much allure to me as your postcard-perfect desert island with its single palm tree and white sands (admittedly, I get sent a lot less content from the former kind of place).

Yet, from what I understand from those out there doing the exploring, and perhaps despite what this issue in particular might have us believe, the potential that sits within many islands and island chains still largely remains unrealized by foil. And honestly, how exciting is that? That there is so much opportunity out there yet for us all to share and enjoy is intoxicating, and for someone who makes his living out of good looking and interesting foil content... well, bring it on I say.

Circling back to my grapple with my first experience of Covid, and I was having my fair share of bizarre dreams with it. One night, no doubt in some part spurred on from my thoughts about this issue's content, I had a dream that the Earth was the size of Jupiter, the most enormous planet, with huge continents and thousands upon thousands of remote island archipelagos scattered around this behemoth of a globe. Getting to anywhere took literal weeks.

Somewhere out there in the far reaches of space and time, I like to think that this planet is or has been a reality, and I hope upon hope that they too have discovered foiling, because – well – just imagine...

Enjoy the issue.

Cai Waggett

EDITOR

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Editor-in-Chief: Alex Hapgood
Sub-editor: Sarah Sylvester
Art Director: Nikki Hall
Senior Photo Editor: Ydwer van der Heide
Digital Marketing: Tom Weyers
Technical Editor: Richard Boughton
Contributing Editor: Steve Sjuggerud

CONTRIBUTORS
Adam Bennetts, Adrian Soldado, Alvaro Rodriguez, Ana Catarina, Andre Magarao, Armie Armstrong, Arthur Arutkin, Arthur Samzun, Axel Mazella, Bobo Gallagher, Bowien van der Linden, Brandon Scheid, Bradford King, Brendan Donohue, Brian Finch, Brodie Sutherland, Bruno Sroka, Chase Viken, Chris Defrance, Chris Sayer, Christian Brown, Clement Roseyro, Craig Kolesky, Dane Wilson, David Tonijuan, David Trewern, Dayanidhi Das, Eric Duran, Erik Aeder, Erik Antonson, Fabian Muhmenthaler, Fabien Vollenweider, Garrett Cortese, Gollito Estredo, Graham Wiles, Greg Rabejac, Guenther Oka, Henning Nockel, Ian Bird, Ivan van Vuuren, Jack Ho, Jaco Kleiweg, James Boulding, James Casey, James Jenkins, Jason Miller, Jeremy Wilmotte, Jérôme Houyvet, John Lewis, Julien Leleu, Klaas Voget, Kyle Mackie, Louis Arnaud Lavasier, Ludo Dulou, Lutz Englert, Mala'e McElheny, Marti Medina, Mathis Ghio, Matt Etxebarne, Matty Leong, Maxwell Gifted, Mike Raper, Miles Taylor, Moona Whyte, Nathan van Vuuren, Nick Leason, Olivia Piana, Patri McLaughlin, Patrick Israel, Paul Wakelin, Pedro Gomes, Peter Petersen, Phil Sobolev, Philip Muller, Quinn Wilson, Ray Collins, Robin Pijls, Rodrigo Donoso, Ron Johnson, Ronny Kiaulehn, Ryu Adegawa, Samuel Cardenas, Shawn Parkin, Simon Bridge, Simon Crowther, Simon Sheppard, Sofie Louca, Swan Habelt, Thomas Burblies, Tibo dos Santos, Tim McKenna, Titouan Galea, Toby Bromwich, Tom Constant, Victor Hays, Wesley Brito, Wyatt Miller, Zane Schweitzer

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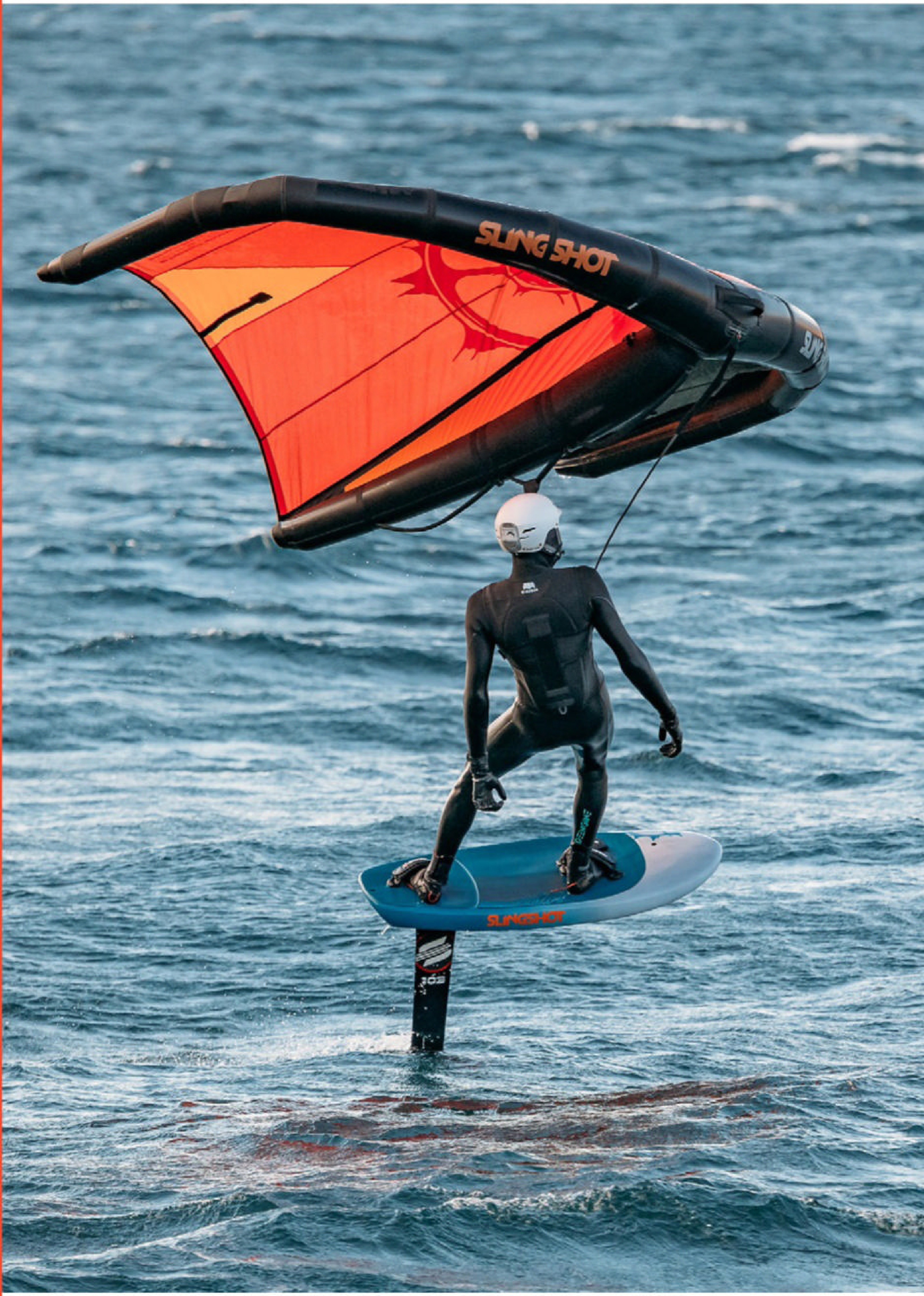

HERE
When those arms just need a little time out, mid-session… Riccardo Zorzi, on a Lake Garda run last December. Photo: Ronny Kiaulehn

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950 cm²
Freestyle / Wave / Speed
—

STABILIZER
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—

MASTS
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—

MAST BASE
90mm Track System
—

XC

m^2
2.5
—
3.0
—
3.5
—
4.0
—
4.5
—
5.0
—
5.5
—
6.0
—
7.0

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Freestyle / Wave

4'11" / 70l
Freestyle / Wave

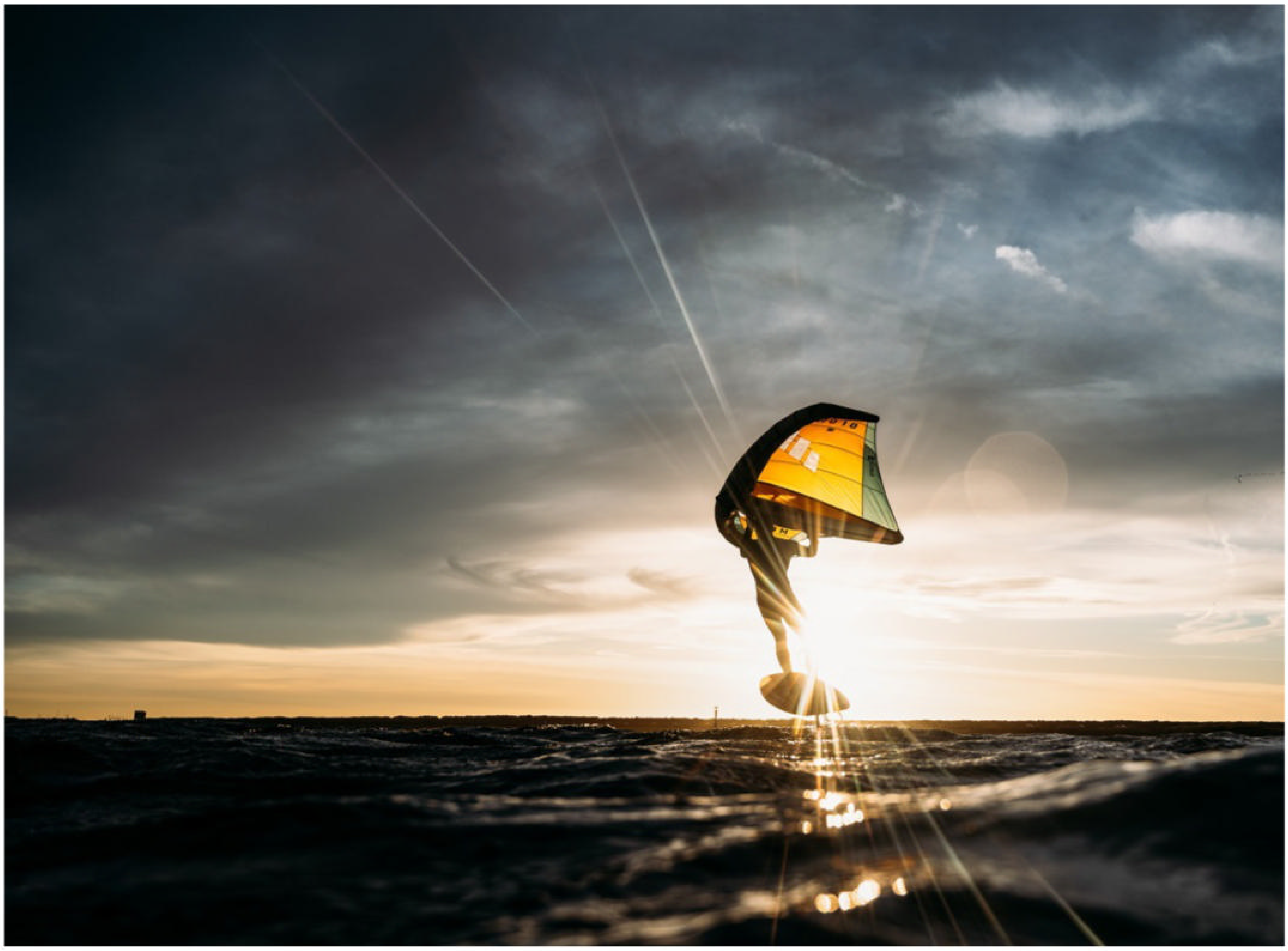
5'5" / 90l
Freeride / Cruising

5'9" / 110l
Freeride / Cruising

6'3" / 130l
Learning / Progression
—

Rider **Joel Dace** / Production @supernothing_ofc

XC
CORE
ROAMER
CORE



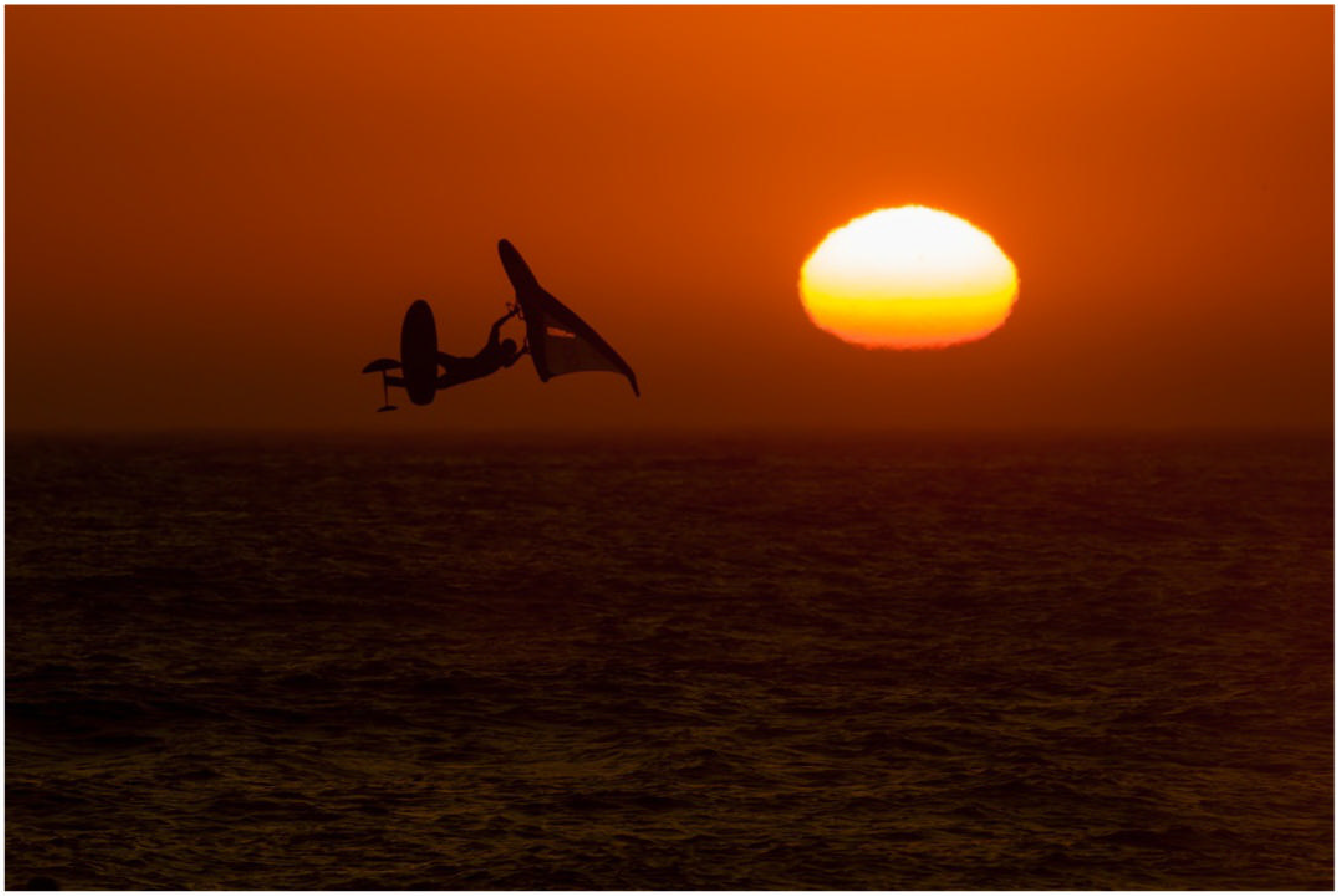
RIDER Robin Pijls
LOCATION Ouddorp, Netherlands
PHOTOGRAPHER Jaco Kleiweg

Robin: It is great how we constantly continue the search and chase the best conditions. Sharing a beautiful sunset with friends on the water is worth coming home to, though. We finished off the summer season with Jaco in the water and all the boys dancing around him. You don't always need barrels and 40 knots of wind...

RIDER Bobo Gallagher
LOCATION Maui
PHOTOGRAPHER Sofie Louca

Bobo: One foot ground swell plus the right size tide plus thirty knots of wind and the brand-new Duotone Unit D/LAB equal a really fun session. Secrets is one of my favorite wing spots on Maui's North Shore because there are always really good waves to carve and super good ramps to soar high. For the session I was riding the new 2023 Duotone 4'2 Sky Surf. It was a super fun session filled with high jumps and tricks.

DUOTONE
UNIT
D/LAB



RIDER Clement Roseyro
LOCATION Scarborough, South Africa
PHOTOGRAPHER Craig Kolesky

Clement: Cold water, strong wind, rocky beach, sharky water... South Africa has it all to make the perfect sunset session. The goal was set to wait for the sun to go down and try to get the perfect picture, jumping right into it! Close enough?

DOWNWIND
+ HYBRID
DOWNWIND

HYBRID
90
LITRES
HYBRID
110
LITRES
HYBRID
100
LITRES
HYBRID
120
LITRES
DOWN WIND
100
LITRES
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RIDER James Casey
LOCATION Narrabeen, Australia
PHOTOGRAPHER Ian Bird

James: Moonrise sessions are special for me, to me it is my old man looking down on me. This session downwind foiling under the moonlight I felt like he was definitely keeping an eye on me. Stoked my mate Ian Bird is as stoked on shooting it as I am out there enjoying it.

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SURF
UNIT C01

UNIT C01

UNIT C02

UNIT C03

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RIDER Brian Finch
LOCATION Orlando, Florida
PHOTOGRAPHER Garrett Cortese

Brian: This was the most fun I've had wake foiling and I believe my eighth or ninth session. I still suck at it. I've had some frustrating sessions. The angles and energy are vastly different from surf foiling. The energy pocket is tighter, and the 'lip' is quite elusive. Wake foiling is very predictable, but it's still easy to get lost trying to connect to second and third wake, trying to fade out of the power pocket and drive up into a foamy lip or coping, rip a cutback without getting left behind, and landing airs require the opposite mechanics compared to the ocean. However, this session I humbly received some coaching from professional wakeboarder Guenther Oka that really got me hyped and enjoying riding behind a boat. My favorite part about wake foiling is the opportunity of repetition. If things go wrong, you can try the same maneuver at the same speed, wave power, and shape. It's like sharpening a knife.

RIDER Mala'e McElheny
LOCATION North Shore, Maui
PHOTOGRAPHER Toby Bromwich

Mala'e: I was super stoked to be in my first photo shoot on Maui with the Duotone and Fanatic team for the release of the Slick SLS. It was awesome to score good conditions winging with Klaas, Sky, Olivia, and Bobo. I also learned a lot working with the photographers Toby Bromwich and Fishbowldiaries, and videographer Jace Panebianco. It was really fun meeting up every day, making a plan with the team, and getting to wing as much as possible.

RIDER Adrian Soldado
LOCATION Masnou, Spain
PHOTOGRAPHER Marti Medina

Adrian: This was a morning photo session at the glassy and transparent turquoise waters on Masnou, a well-known Barcelona surf spot. With really light wave conditions and no wind it's still perfect for beachstart training time! The beach has a deep step that makes it easy to get on to the foil and then you just have to pump around 100m to arrive at the sand bank where those tiny waves were breaking.

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SPAN (MM) = 900
CHORD (MM) = 176
ASPECT RATIO = 6.4

G 1000 FRONT WING V1
SURFACE AREA (CM2) = 1355
SPAN (MM) = 1000
CHORD (MM) = 171
ASPECT RATIO = 7.4

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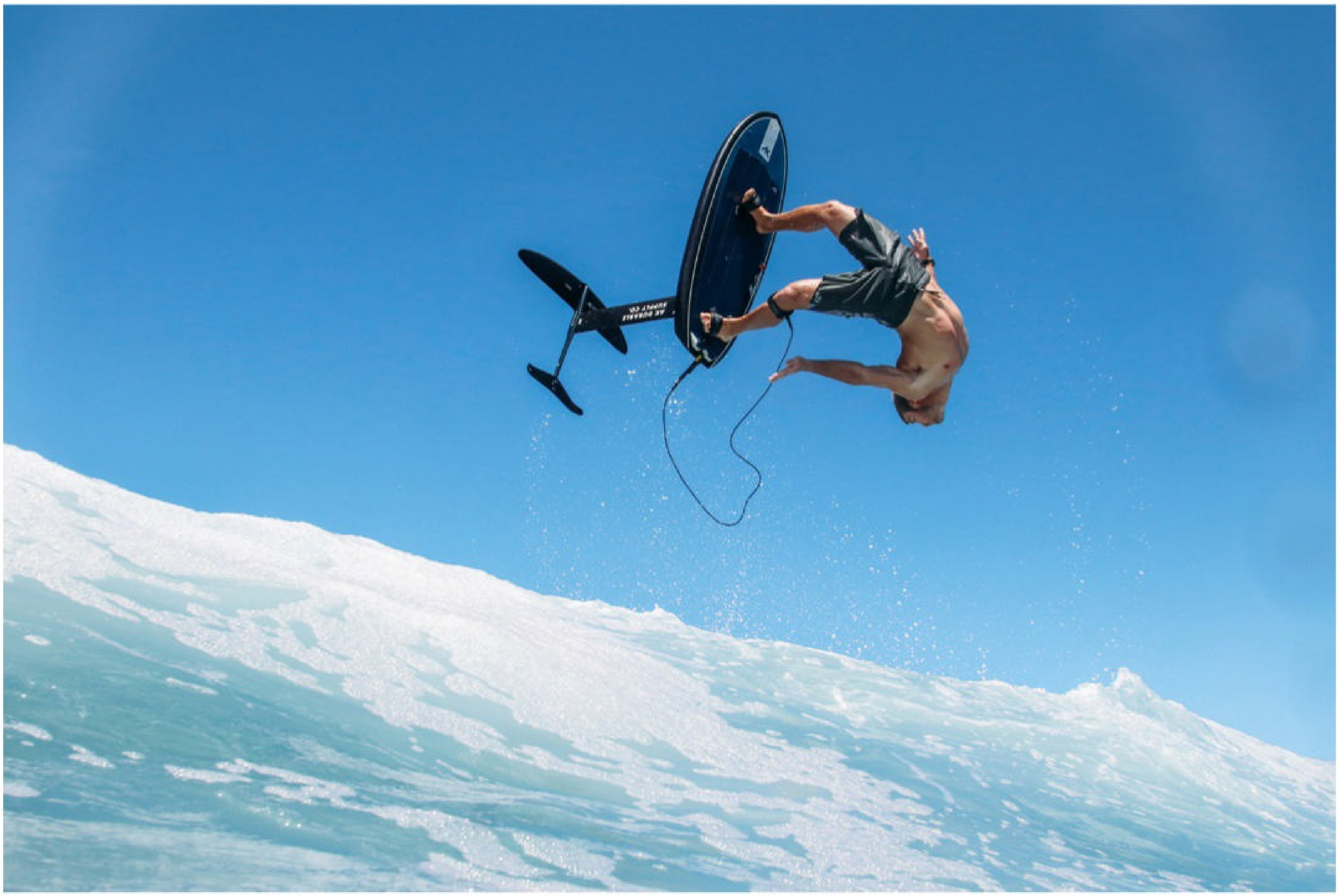
RIDER Wesley Brito
LOCATION Le Morne, Mauritius
PHOTOGRAPHER Maxwell Gifted

Wesley: Besides many things, Mauritius is a great place to find awesome wing foiling conditions – No matter if you are looking for flat water or waves. For me Le Morne Beach is my favorite. On this day, I was just on my way back to the beach after hours of catching waves at Manawa. I saw Max, a super cool and talented dude, also swimming out after shooting with kitesurfer Matchu Lopes at One Eye. He just asked me to pull a few jumps and that's it. I wasn´t expecting to shoot with him that day, but the result was awesome. Can't wait to go back to this amazing spot.

RIDER Lutz Englert
LOCATION Paracaru, Brazil
PHOTOGRAPHER Thomas Burblies

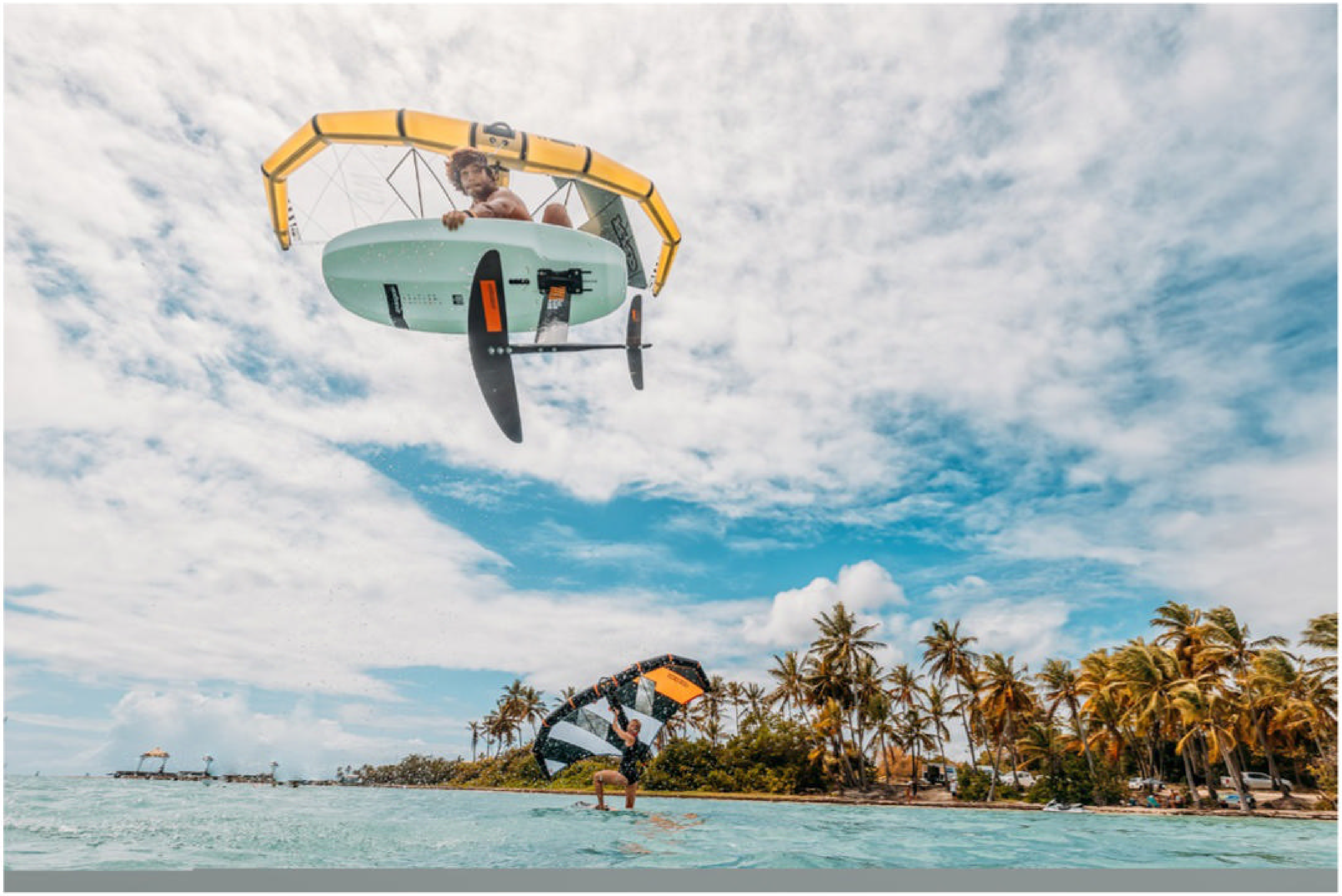
Lutz: This spot should be on the list for every wingfoiler who's searching for waves in Brazil. Thanks to the little point a bit further east, its super easy to get through the shore break and score some nice waves. With the wind usually blowing side on, you can catch a wave with almost every tack. Just keep an eye on the locals – there are quite a few turtles in the water!



AK DURABLE SUPPLY CO.

RIDER Zane Schweitzer
LOCATION Ho’okipa, Maui
PHOTOGRAPHER Erik Aeder

Zane: There’s no shortage of action, fun, and training at home here on Maui. Even on the days that are small with light wind I always find myself occupied and having a blast, especially with a hydrofoil in the quiver. Being a part of the evolution of the AK Durable Supply Co. foils and Phazer boards has been a blast over the last few years. This session I had the pleasure to work with legendary water photographer Erik Aeder at Ho’okipa, on the north shore of Maui. The waves were barely chest high, and there was just enough water over the reef to clear with the foil. In this shot, I’m upside down mid-rotation on a backflip on the way back out after I had just kicked out. As someone who’s always looking for action and a natural high, this is one of my favorite parts about hydrofoiling… Action on the wave in and then on the way back out if you want it. Heck, sometimes just staying flying, connecting waves left and right the whole session!



RIDER Gollito Estredo
LOCATION Guadeloupe
PHOTOGRAPHER Simon Crowther

Gollito: This shot was taken in Saint Francois, Guadeloupe. Everything looked "picture perfect" out there, from the color of the water to the conditions, so the team was eager to get started and photographer Simon Crowther was ready to benefit from that great backdrop. I was excited to try the RRD Gold Wing 5.0 and was super stoked and surprised that even in light wind I was able to perform some radical maneuvers and reach really good heights. The right gear setup really amplified how much fun we had in the water that day, which is clear in the pictures that Simon took.

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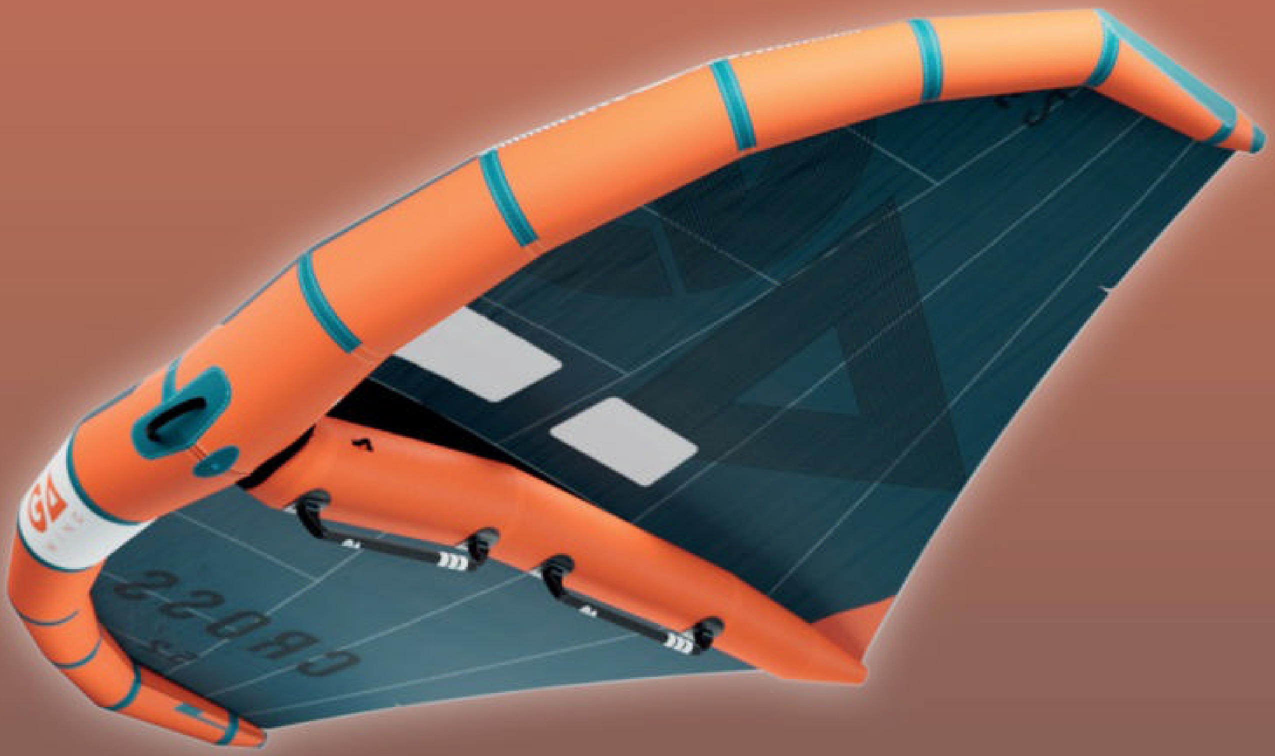
TABOU
220

RIDER: *NICOLÒ SPANU* ***PRODUCTS:*** *TABOU POCKET AIR TEAM / GA WINGS CROSS / GA FOILS HYBRID*

GA
WINGS



CROSS 2023

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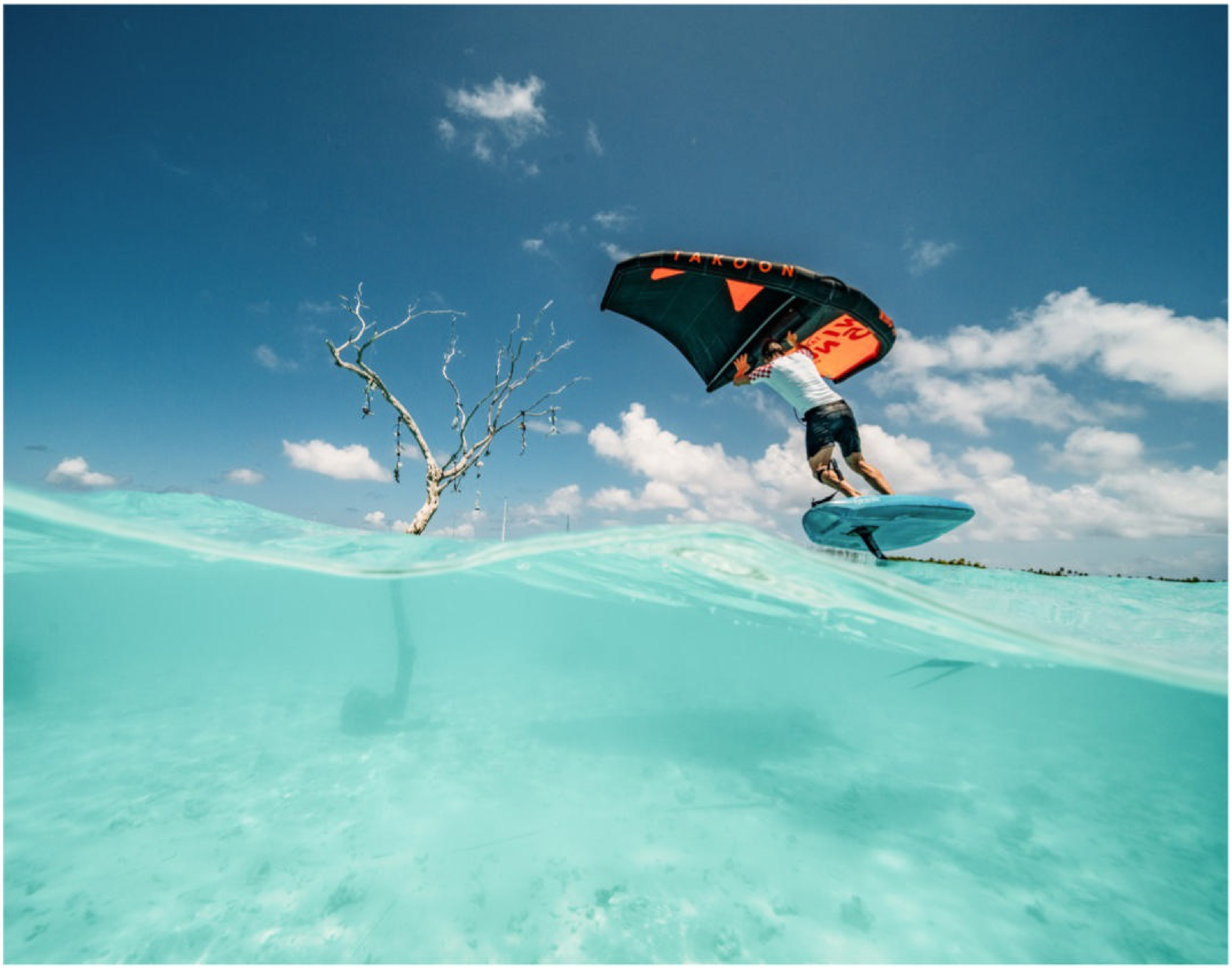
2.2 | 2.8 | 3.5 | 4.2 | 5.2 | 6.2

Gaastra **NEW SPORTS GmbH Germany.**
Tel: +49 (0) 2234 933 400 E-mail: info@gaastra.com **Photo:** Siam Images

RIDER Axel Mazella and Torrin Bright
LOCATION Mauritius
PHOTOGRAPHER Louis Arnaud Lavasier

Axel: Afternoon light wind session with Torrin Bright in Le Morne on Manawa. It was such a nice feeling riding those glassy waves and carving together. We were alone, trying to survive in marginal light wind. No room for error, we knew that if we fell we wouldn't make it back. We flew the new Ozone Fly V1 and Apex MA 900, that was our perfect combo that allowed us to ride through a no-wind zone and to keep the glide of the foil to catch the next wave.

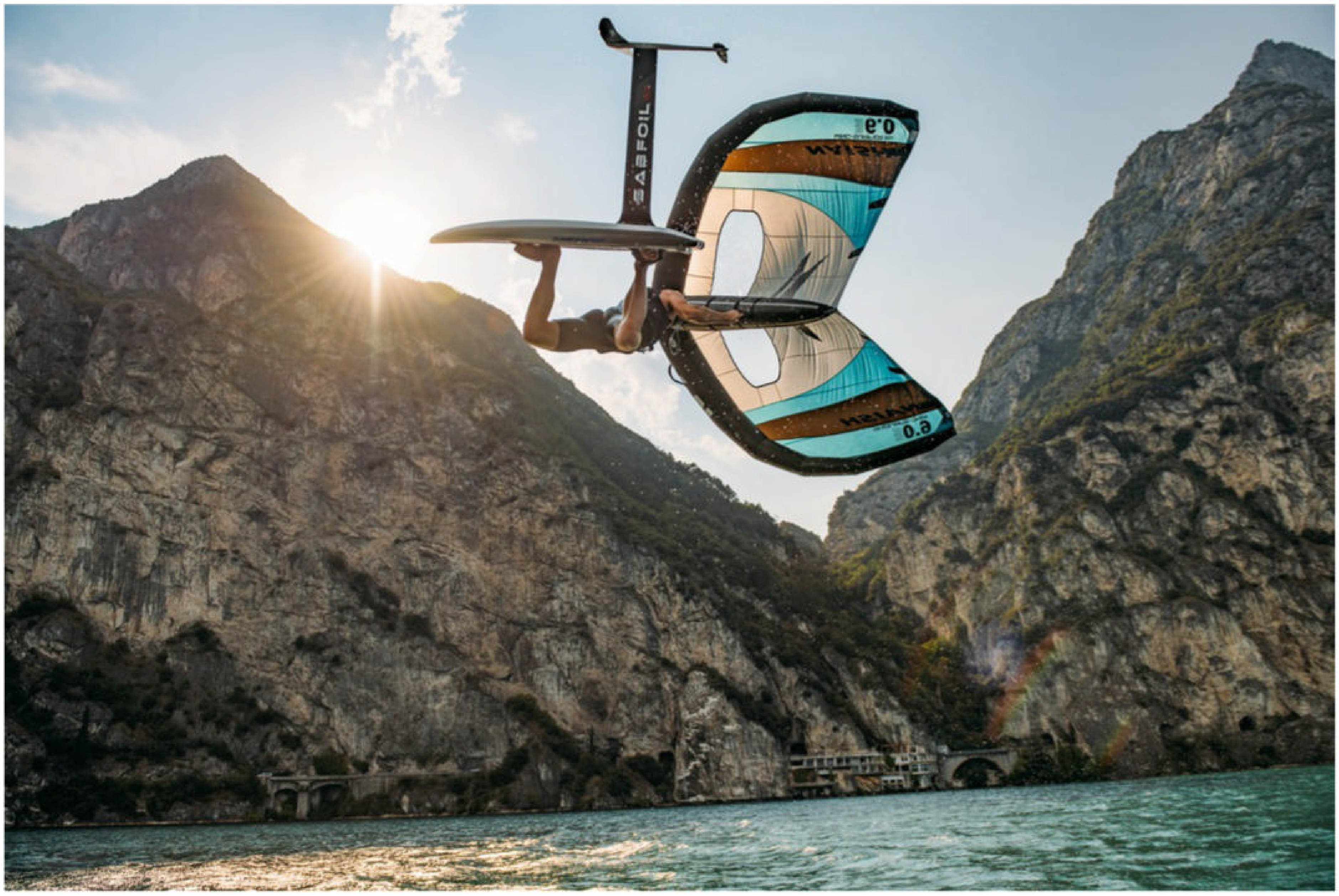


RIDER Ludo Dulou
LOCATION Tuamotus Archipelago, Polynesia
PHOTOGRAPHER Tim McKenna

Ludo: This was during our Oxbow surf trip to Polynesia. I brought a wing because we knew that there would be trade winds in the afternoon. We found this tree in the lagoon, and Tim had this idea of going around it on the wing. He was in the water, so I had fun circling it...

RIDER Pietro Leon Kiaulehn
LOCATION Lake Garda, Italy
PHOTOGRAPHER Ronny Kiaulehn

Ronny: It was one of these extremely hot and endless summer days. We were shooting video all day long for the launch of our Wingman Products website, getting some incredible FPV drone shots and spending hours filming from the zodiac. Actually, we'd already called it a day when our zodiac pilot Gogo came up to me and said: "If you wanna go for an evening photo session, I will be waiting for you on the boat". Pietro and I were looking at each other... Tired, hungry and sunburnt. But it was the time in the late afternoon when the wind picks up again and we had the lake to ourselves. So we went for it and had an awesome session. Thanks Gogo!



APPLE SKIPPER

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Rider: Dylan Wichmann | Photo: Tanner Adshade

Surf foiling rapidly evolves and so should your equipment. We introduce to you the Apple Skipper: your high-performance surf foil board.

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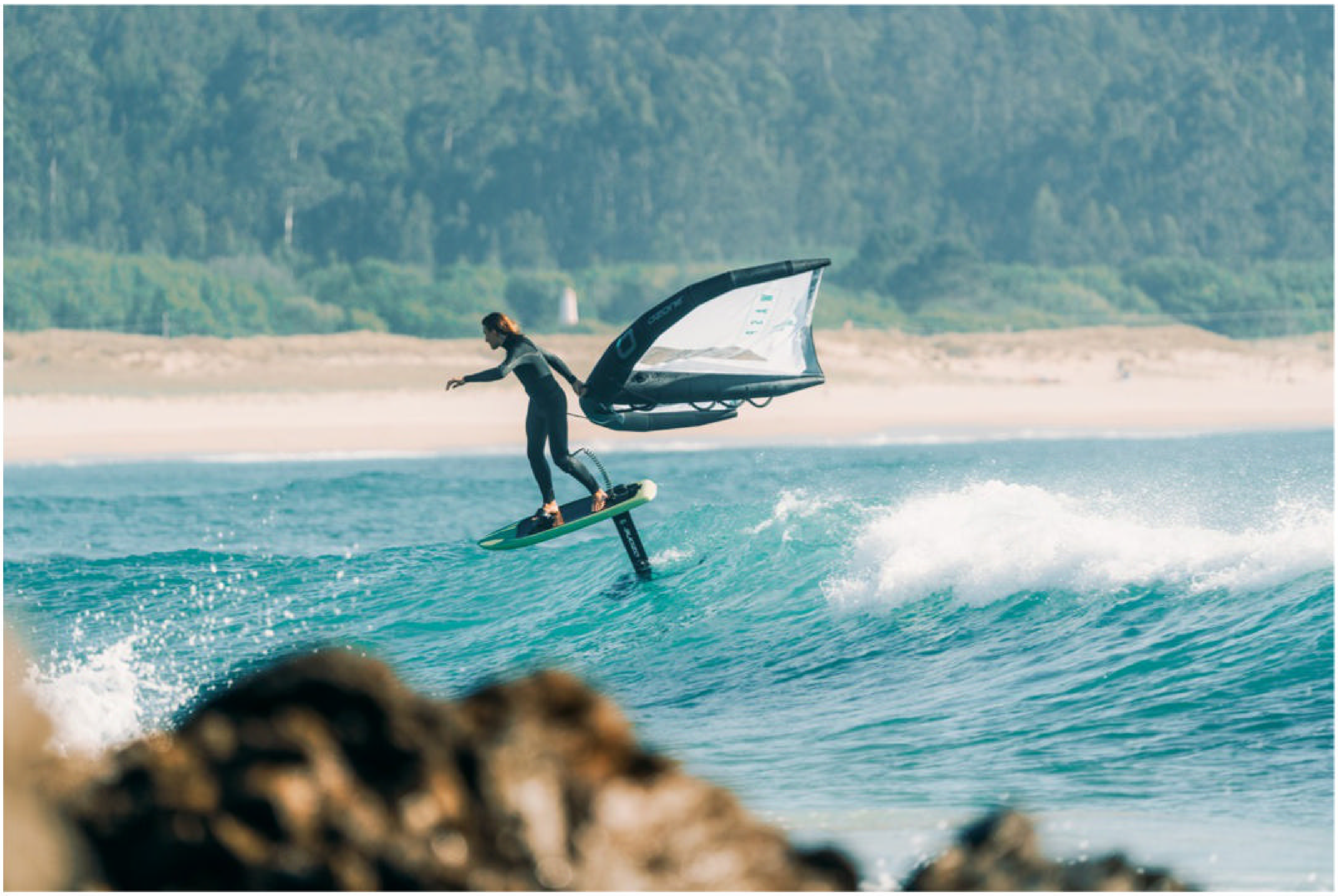
RIDER Brandon Scheid
LOCATION Punta Gorda, BCS
PHOTOGRAPHER Eric Duran

Brandon: Southern Baja is one of my favorite places in the whole world. Life in Baja is laid back and easy going. The day's most pressing concern is usually where to score an amazing session or what delicious tacos you're going to eat for dinner. This season's riding conditions have certainly been all time, with seemingly endless days of wind. While I am currently spending most of my time in Baja working on the next round of amazing wing products for the upcoming 2024 Slingshot Sports line, I seem to always be able to sneak away for a little time in front of my favorite photographer's lens. Eric has a knack for always coming away from the hard-earned shoots with amazing shots. He sure has one hell of a work ethic and is more comfortable in the water than a fish. Grateful to be airing one out over the lush Baja landscape, on just another day in the office.

SLINGSHOT
SLINGSHOT



RIDER Simon Burner
LOCATION Galicia, Spain
PHOTOGRAPHER Alvaro Rodriguez

David Tonijuan (Ozone Marketing Manager): Galicia, the Ozone Wasp shoot 2022, what an amazing place it was… We have always searched for dreamy destinations and traveled all around the world to find the perfect spot to ride or to get that perfect shot without any other rider in the background. The pandemic forced us to discover spots within our own incredible country, without having to travel very far. Coming from kitesurfing, Galicia made me realize the accessibility wing foiling offers to new and incredible spots that I would've never imagined I would ride.

CABRINHA

RIDER Kyle Mackie (Cabrinha Customer Support)
LOCATION Kanaha Beach Park, Maui
PHOTOGRAPHER Patri Mclaughlin

Kyle: Being born and raised on Maui, I've always gravitated towards Cabrinha and Dakine as brands that embody the values and lifestyle of my Island home. With over ten years of hydrofoil and kitesurfing experience, I find myself testing prototypes and participating in photoshoots for these brands which have been very dear to me from the start, and I am beyond grateful to have recently joined their team roster of international riders. In product testing and shooting for the latest 03 collection from Cabrinha, it's clear to us that that our new wings and foils are on the cutting edge of modern design.

RIDER Patrick Israel
LOCATION Duke's Oceanfest, Queens Beach Oahu
PHOTOGRAPHER Ron Johnson

Patrick: Josh Thomson (in the red jersey) of The Foil Shop asked if I wanted to represent California at the Duke's Oceanfest surf contest. I was pumped to pick a team of friends that rip to head to Oahu and show the Hawaiians that the crew in California can hold their own in the water. With the contest being a team event, we got to surf the historic Queen's Beach break with just our friends, sharing waves and stoke for 30 minutes. All while putting on a show for the crowd that lined the beach! I was pumped to have the highest score from the un-strapped division and to positively represent California in the foiling world.

SURF & WIND

FOIL BOARDS

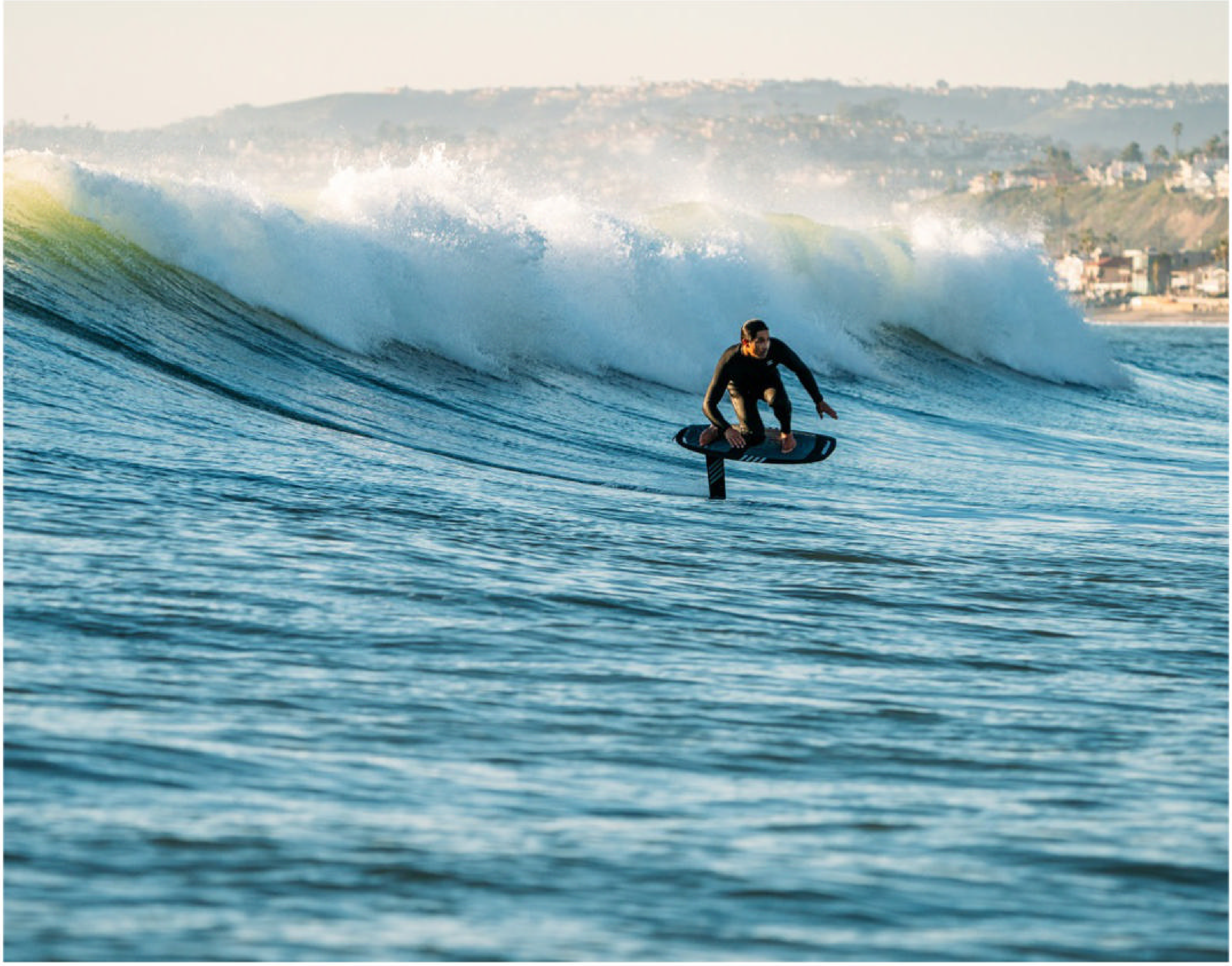
Lift Foils now offers nine board sizes across surf and wind, shaped by Sean Ordoñez. Featuring a featherweight EPS core and carbon lamination that is second to none, we take great pride in our boards. Each board is specifically designed to be perfectly tuned with any Lift foil setup, finished off with custom EVA traction pads and shipped in a day bag that can be used to keep your board in mint condition for years to come.

TEAM RIDER: BRIAN GRUBB
PHOTO: RODRIGO DONOSO

www.liftfoils.com

RIDER Clement Roseyro
LOCATION Cape Verde
PHOTOGRAPHER Samuel Cardenas

Clement: Doing an aerial, I both feel a rush of adrenaline and a sense of accomplishment. The thrill of successfully executing a challenging trick can be incredibly satisfying, and the stunning natural setting of the sunset only amplifies that feeling. The wind rushing past you, the roar of the ocean below, and the beauty of the sunset all combine to create a moment of pure joy and exhilaration. I feel a sense of freedom and release, as I am in perfect harmony with the elements around me. It's a moment that I will likely remember for a long time to come.



RIDER Jason Miller
LOCATION Southern California
PHOTOGRAPHER Shawn Parkin

Jason: This was my first go on the newly minted Freedom Whip – a tow-specific board built for the surf and behind a boat. We were fortunately greeted by an out-of-season south swell, low tides and beautiful backlit lighting. For me, this image is the epitome of a classic California afternoon.

SLINGSHOT
82

RIDER: KYLIE ZARMATI PHOTOGRAPHER: ERIC DURAN

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RIDEENGINE

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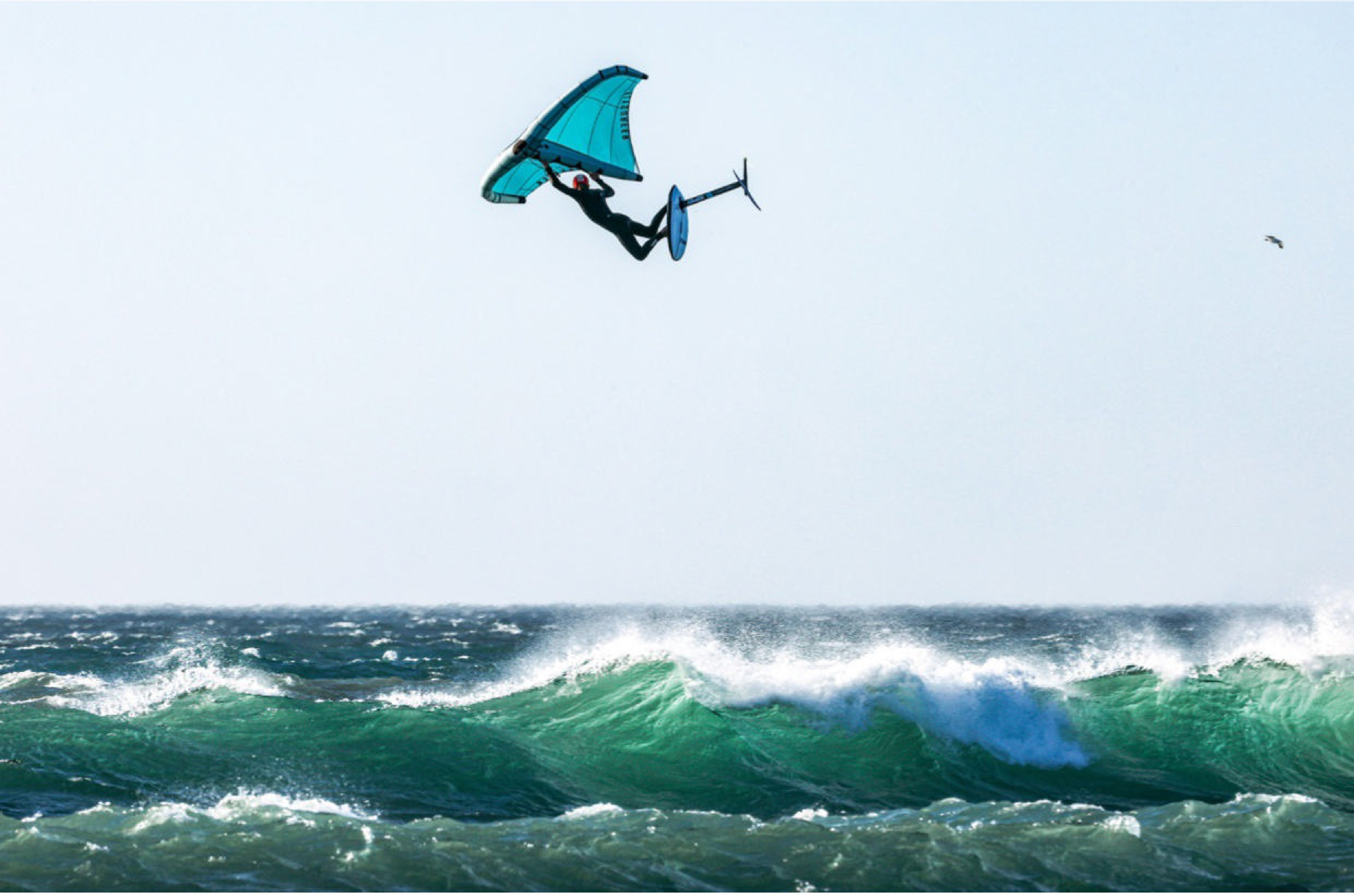
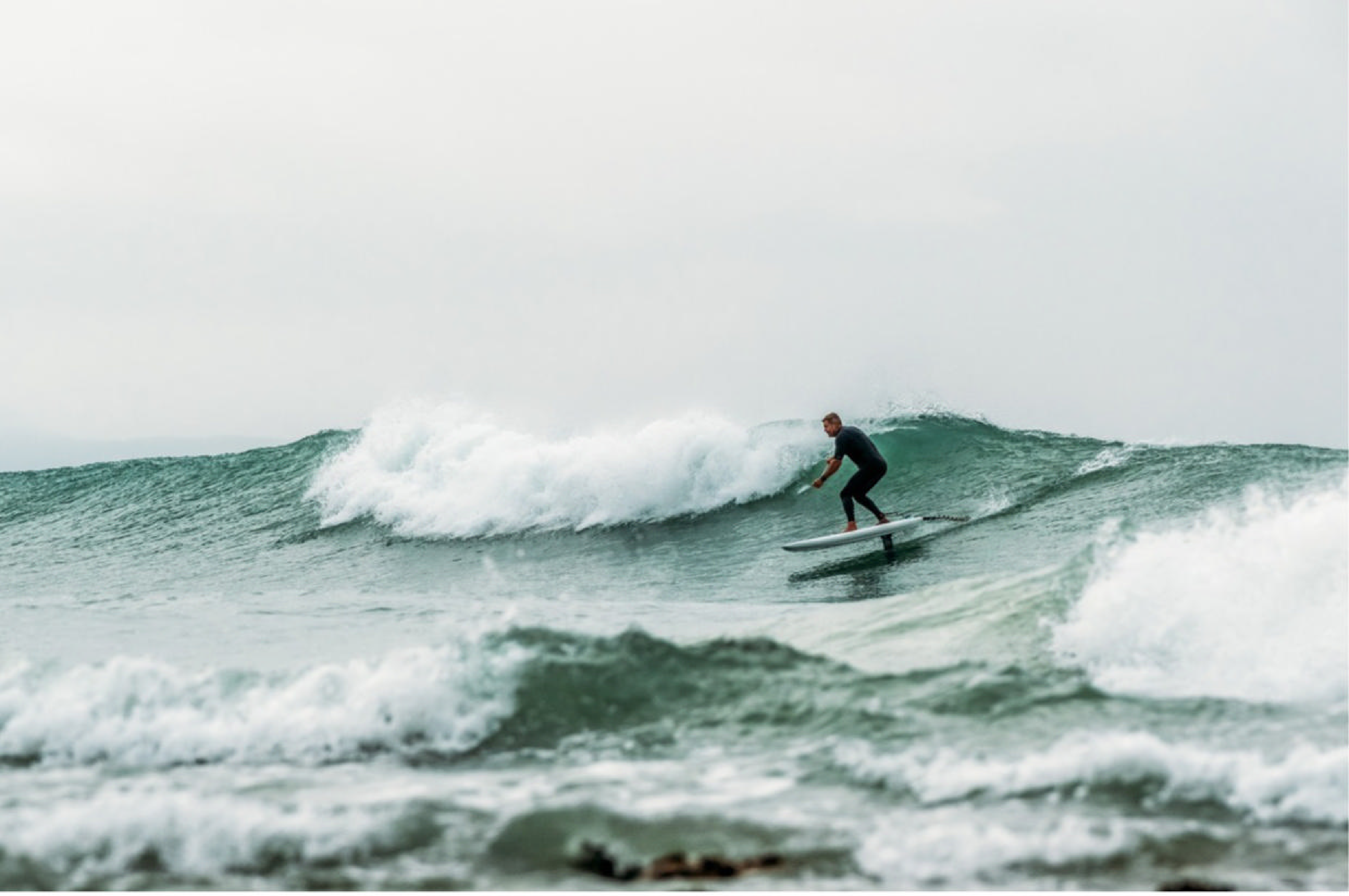
RIDER Nathan van Vuuren
LOCATION West Coast, Cape Town
PHOTOGRAPHER Ivan van Vuuren

Nathan: This was one of those sessions where the swell was perfect for wave riding and boosting, and the wind was a perfect 25-30 knots. I was out in the water with a bunch of friends and we were all pushing each other to go bigger and bigger. Eventually, after a bit of waiting and cheering my buddies on, the perfect wave and gust of wind lined up so that I could send it, and we were able to capture this rad moment of flight!



RIDER Swan Habelt
LOCATION Mo’orea
PHOTOGRAPHER Andre Magarao

Swan: Mo’orea is a small island in French Polynesia. I consider myself very lucky because this island has the craziest conditions to foil and surf all over, and this day was particularly crazy because the wind and the swell were perfectly matched up and firing. When you ride here, you’re kept afloat by all the good island vibes… and the colors here just blow your mind.



RIDER Peter Petersen
LOCATION St Francis, Eastern Cape
PHOTOGRAPHER Graham Wiles

Graham: Over the last few years, the AK team have been making their way down to the Eastern Cape in order to find warmer water, wind, and waves. There are few opportunities for us to get together like this, and it's a combination of shoots, testing, and time off. On this particular morning, local SUP legend and hydrofoil test pilot, Peter Petersen, took the all-new Duratech Phazer out for a sunrise session on a really overcast morning. The weather wasn't exactly on our side, although we still found a good mix of surf, foil, and kite action with the crew.

RIDER Jeremy Wilmotte
LOCATION Maroubra Beach, Australia
PHOTOGRAPHER Simon Bridge

Jeremy: It does not matter how old you are, the excitement is real when new prototype wings arrive in the mail. Quite often the wing does not work or you take it out in conditions not suited, but occasionally it just clicks instantly. This was my very first session in poor conditions but it outperformed everything I'm using at the moment. A few more iterations and hopefully more people can enjoy the flight. Or surf more specifically as the gap is really small now between those two sports.

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VOYAGER

Staking a fair claim as the best downwind foil film to date, Voyager follows local Jack Ho and the downwinder crew of O'ahu's south shore, gloriously depicting the joys of riding open ocean swell lines, and Jack's narration giving more than just a nod to how it all came about in the first place. It's a must watch.

WORDS **JACK HO**
PHOTOS **CHASE VIKEN, BRENDAN DONAHUE, MATTY LEONG**

The idea behind the film 'Voyager' was to capture something that nobody has seen before. In partnership with Lift Foils, the piece is intended to show passion, express emotion, relate to a local audience, as well as share insight to a foreign audience. As many of us think of downwind foiling as an art or a sport, many others are left in awe after seeing videos or photos of riders flying downwind, as they have never seen anything like it before. In hopes of sharing a story and showing the beauty of the sport as well as this place we call home, the film "Voyager" was created.

The story starts in 2019, when the downwind scene came to life on the island of O'ahu. Master foiler and lifeguard Simeon KePaloma took his lifelong canoe paddling skills and translated them to downwind foiling. With trial and error, he was finally able to connect multiple surf spots off of one single ride. At the time, this was mind blowing. On Maui, Kai Lenny, Dave Kalama, and the "early days" Maui crew had been exploring the downwind scene but they were all using SUP foil boards to do longer open ocean runs. However, at the time, the foils weren't as innovative and fast as they are now, making it a little bit more challenging to maintain glide and lift. What made the O'ahu scene so special was that the downwind bumps were only less than 100 yards outside the surf breaks. After Simeon cracked the code, he let some of the boys know and we all had to give it a shot. Within a week, we were all up and riding on the two-mile coast run, which is now known as the "Kaiko'o's run." It started off with a group of five of us, which then led into a group chat being created. Five turned into ten, then ten to twenty. Now, on a windy day, you can drive by the lookout at Diamond Head and see little black dots making their way from east to west. This is evidence of the contagious fun that is being spread here on the south shore of O'ahu. The feeling over gliding is unmatched and that is the feeling of freedom we are all chasing.

Fast forward to the present day, three years after the birth of our original crew, it was about time to capture this scene in high definition. Under direction of Matty Leong, Chase Viken, and myself, the idea to make the first downwind short film came to life. The actual foiling part was a cool thing to think about but the focal point was the characters and emotion that comes from this unique group. The diverse group of wave riders include youthful foilers like myself, professional surfers such as Zeke Lau and Kekoa Cazimero, Hawai'i's finest lifeguards, my school teacher, uncles and relatives, my friends' dads, and every other type of person you can think of. It is a true ohana. The catch behind this is that we all come from so many different backgrounds, yet all get together to do the one thing we all love.

Shooting for this piece began in October of 2022. With co-director Chase Viken getting flown in from the mainland, we had three days to nail this film. One day for B-roll and the other two days for foiling. The film begins with showing home – Waikīkī. Then, transitions to my house on Le'ahi. The shift in story then goes to the group and the action of the sport. The order in which the story is told is due to the fact that Hawai'i has given us the opportunity to perform in the most beautiful arena in the world. My house highlights where I grew up, but more importantly, the overcoming of racism In Hawai'i during the 1900s. Lastly, the foiling shows the true beauty that Hawai'i has to offer. The ocean can be the most dangerous and scary place, or it could offer the most fun for the given day. Thanks to the hydrofoils, any windy day when the ocean is "angry" suddenly becomes the best playground.

For those who view this film, I hope it inspires you to get out there and fly on your local downwind run. You would be surprised how many places in the world can offer downwind conditions. All that is needed is ocean, wind, and a stretch of coastline.

From this sport, I think we can all agree that the connections and friends that have been made are a blessing and something to forever cherish. Until next time, aloha. ⋘

RISING UP

THE FUTURE
FACES OF FOILING

RYU ADEGAWA

takuma
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takuma

Over to Japan for Rising Up this issue, and introducing Ryu Adegawa, a talented, multi-disciplined foiler who is also proficient in a range of other water sports… Not bad going for a ten-year-old.

PHOTOS **PEDRO GOMES**

Hey Ryu! So firstly, tell us how old you are, where you live, and where do you like to ride?

I live in Isumi town in Chiba prefecture, Japan, and my favorite place to ride is the Isumi River Mouth, the closest spot near my house. I like Isumi because it's easy to pump back, and it's great for long riding.

What's your usual go-to foil setup?

Right now, my go-to setup for prone and winging is the Takuma foil Kujira 980 with carbon mast, the board is a Takuma Morning Sun 4`2 30L. Besides prone and wingfoiling, I also enjoy kitesurfing, stand up paddle, prone surf, and I sometimes do tow-in foiling with my father. I like to see the day's conditions and choose the proper setup for the conditions. If it's shallow in the low tide, I do SUP, if it's windy, I go wingfoiling, and so on.... But foiling is my favorite kind of surfing right now, I always go for long rides, and it makes me feel good.

How much time do you get to foil outside of your schoolwork?

In summer, I can foil like two to three hours every day after school. In winter it gets dark very early, so I can only get in the water for 30 minutes or less. On days off school, I can foil for eight hours or more. If the conditions are good, I basically spend all day long in the water, just having a little break to eat a rice ball or some snacks.

Do you find it hard to balance the two?

Sometimes it is hard, but I can handle that; I put a lot of time into foiling, but I don't forget to do my homework, and I attend a normal school like the other kids of my age.

Does anyone else in your family foil?

My father does, as well as all kinds of surfing, and I learn a lot from him.

Who's been the most significant influence in your foiling?

I really like Kai Lenny and Adam Bennetts. Kai goes for big waves, outer reef deep water stuff, and Adam has a very beautiful and unique style. They both have a nice style and inspire me a lot.

Have you ever competed in foiling? If not, do you think you might someday?

I took part in a foil contest this year, I ended up losing in the semi-finals. I didn't win, but I really liked taking part in it; I like to compete. I also compete in stand up paddle competitions a lot... I won the Oamishirasato City Cup this summer, and I got second place at the Miyazaki contest in southern Japan. There are more SUP contests than foil contests in Japan right now, but I hope that from now on, more foil events will be held in Japan.

It's clear from these shots that you like to get air... what's the next move you hope to perfect?

I want to get used to backflipping, but I still can't make it. And I also want to improve my landing on big airs; that is something I am working on.

It's ten years from now. What is 20-year-old Ryu Adegawa doing?

I want to be a complete waterman in different kinds of surfing, ride big waves like Jaws and chase barrels all over the world. That's what I dream about. ⋘

SECRET SPOT

JEREMY WILMOTTE

PHOTOGRAPHER **SIMON SHEPPARD**

This wave is one of those top-secret waves for surfing. No cameras and heavily patrolled by grumpy surfers who try to protect their place of recreation. I never saw it as an issue though as it's definitely not a foil wave, being so shallow and best known for being a perfect barreling wave. It's definitely not going to be my regular spot for this reason, but it is crazy beautiful and I got to ride it alone with the photographer. Jeremy

MADE IN FRANCE

With their R&D, production, assembly and testing all contained within their corner of France, French e-foil brand PWR-Foil are proud to have a localized setup that is at once efficient, innovative, reactive to customers, good for the local economy and minimizes its carbon footprint wherever possible. It's something that owner Chris Defrance (seen above) is vocally passionate about… so we went and got The Lowdown.

Hi Chris. So first up tell us where PWR-Foil is based in France, and why the location works so well for the company?

Our new premises are based in Canet-en-Roussillon, in France, five minutes from the Mediterranean Sea, and many of us here are involved in water sports. Being close to the water allows us to have fun during our lunch break and after office hours. It is important for us to test our new products quickly and this proximity to the Mediterranean Sea means that we don't waste any time. Also, when curious people want to try the PWR-Foil, we just take two machines and head to the water, which is only a two-minute walk away.

How many employees do you have at PWR-Foil, and how are the departments divided?

Our team is growing! There are currently 18 employees at PWR-Foil, divided into six departments – R&D, engineering, production, marketing, communications, and the after-sales department.

So tell us about the production process... Do you have to outsource any of it?

80% of our production is based within our new facility in Canet-en-Roussillon. Our batteries are also made here in France and our boards are made in Tunisia.

Why is it so important to you to keep all your R&D and production so hyper-local?

We like to have real control over what we manufacture, and we can therefore focus on excellence, product quality and consumer satisfaction. The fact that we manufacture in France also allows us to support the local economy and our workforce. We promote French know-how and ensure that our staff enjoy good working conditions.

As everything is kept local to your facility, how difficult is it to source staff with the relevant skill sets?

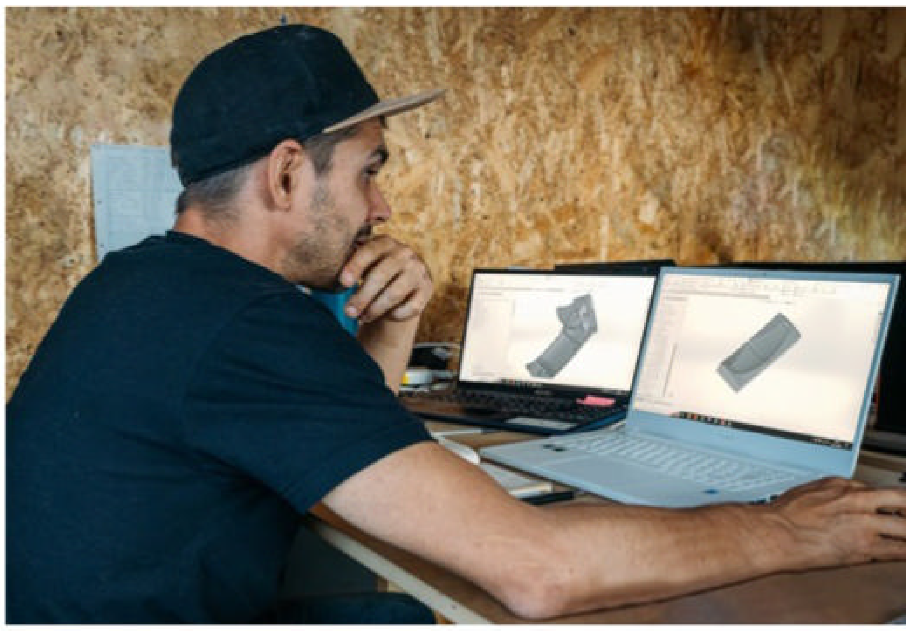
Finding qualified employees is not a problem. The rare element is to find qualified and passionate employees. We have been fortunate in that, because all the people working at PWR-Foil are qualified, passionate and always want to improve.

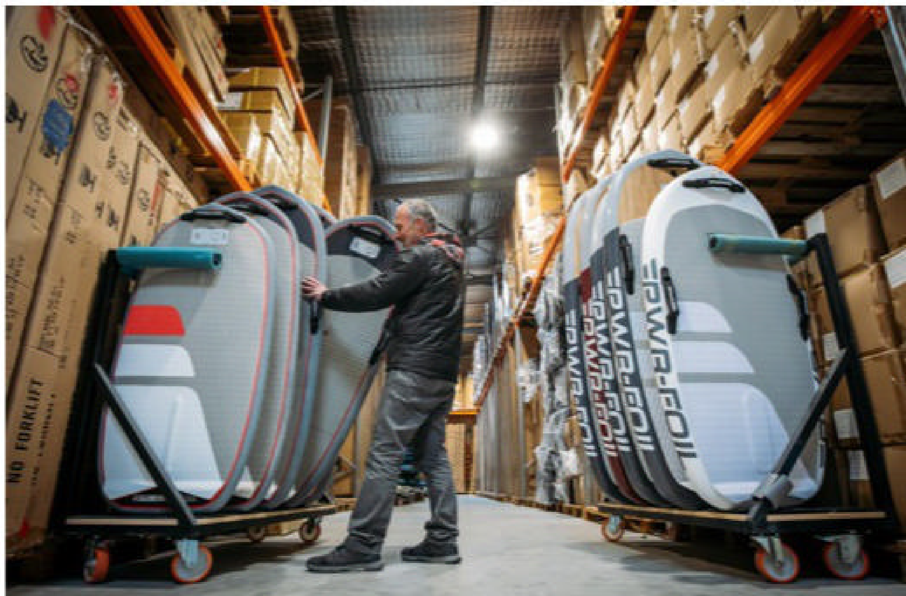
What environmental benefits come from having development and production all based in France, and have you made any steps to reduce environmental and energy consumption impact at the production facility itself?

We are reducing our carbon footprint enormously. A main element of this is removing many travel miles from the receipt of products that may otherwise have been manufactured in far distant countries. At the facility in Canet-en-Roussillon, we are installing solar panels to make more use of natural energy and reduce our energy costs. We are therefore producing 100% renewable and totally decarbonized energy, which reduces our carbon footprint. Also, when you buy from France, you know that national environmental and social standards are respected. A fair wage, good sanitary conditions, good equity and respect for human rights.

The global market has been tricky to navigate these past few years. Do you think by having operations and production based close to home that you're better able to weather these uncertain times?

Yes of course, mastering all the production processes is the key to eliminating as many problems as possible, like the cost, maintaining the quality of the products and more. It's a new job, every day. That's what is difficult but also really exciting! We have qualified and passionate employees who enjoy working in this industry. We are improving our machines day by day and our R&D team is always looking for new features to make the slide even more enjoyable. One thing you can be sure of is that we will never rest on our laurels.



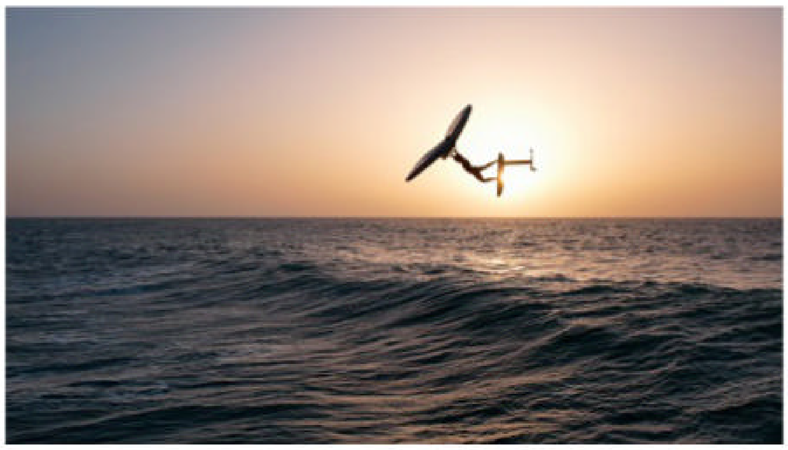


DISPATCHES

WINGING DAKHLA

North riders Chucho Nonnot and Fabian Muhmentahler completed their first 2022 GWA World Tour Event in Tarifa and decided to pack their bags and set off in search of some desert vibes. Their destination? Dakhla, the Moroccan wingfoil mecca on the edge of Western Sahara.

PHOTOS **JULIEN LELEU**



Dakhla is a city located on a 50km long narrow peninsula of the Atlantic Coast. On one side is a flatwater lagoon and on the other, world-class waves. With more than 330 windy days a year, Dakhla is a complete wingfoiling destination suitable for all levels of riders. Desert surrounds the lagoon, a unique playground where you can wing with flamingos and dolphins. The region itself is home to a diverse group of marine animals, birds, reptiles, and mammals that are rare or threatened species. UNESCO supported a project to create Dakhla National Park to preserve the region's natural biodiversity.

Berbers and Arabs have inhabited the Dakhla region since ancient times. Due to its complex geopolitical situation, Dakhla has been influenced by Spain, Morocco, Mauritania, and even Saharawi nomads. Now, Dakhla is the capital of the Moroccan administrative region Dakhla-Oued Ed-Dahab. Tranquil and sleepy during the day due to the often intense Saharan heat, the town comes alive after dark with lively restaurants and cafes, serving diverse cuisine and an abundance of fresh seafood, including the local oysters traditionally farmed by hand.

Fabi explains, "Dakhla has a unique and special vibe; you can feel the magic of the desert coming to you. It's a very ancient place where different cultures have lived, and this place is definitely something. Nature is powerful down there. The people are quite friendly and open, the food is delicious, and there is a wide variety of beautiful places to stay, starting at the lagoon and ending just in front of the surf spot."

A popular spot for international events, in November 2021, Dakhla played host to the first edition of the GWA Wing Foil World Cup. The strong wind season, which starts around April / May and lasts until September, is incredible for freestyle, but the waves tend to be smaller. From October to March, there are lighter winds, but waves are way bigger and more constant. “From my point of view, Dakhla is one of the best all round spots for any water sport. Focusing on foiling, it has outstanding conditions that allow you to train any discipline you want.”

There are several surf spots around this area. The main ones are La Sarga, Point d'Or, Arish, and the hottest surf spot in Morocco, Foumbouir (famous for hosting world surfing and kitesurfing championships). "Westpoint and the closer wave spots are better for pure wave riding, and if the wind is strong, they are world-class spots for freestyle. The lagoon is the perfect place for learning but also for freestyle," says Fabi. "The tide is an essential factor to bear in mind in Dakhla, as the spots change so much from low to high. At the lagoon, with the low tide, a cool spot would be the Speed Spot, with its infamous butter flats. With the higher tide, PK25, Attitude, or Lagoon Energy are fun and easy spots with plenty of chop for jumping.

"I see every time more and more kiters and windsurfers turn into winging, maybe they are starting to understand that it doesn't matter which toys you are using; the important thing is to have fun on the water."

Chucho agrees on the fun count: "Dakhla is definitely in my top three foiling destinations. There are endless opportunities for every rider's style and ability level – flat water lagoons for freestyle, perfect winging waves, beach breaks, and point breaks. All the kite schools on the lagoon have begun to give wing foiling lessons, so it's easily accessible to learn winging with a professional instructor.”

Fabi recalled two particularly good sessions he enjoyed on his visit...

“I had many good sessions during my Dakhla trip, but without a doubt there were two standout sessions, one in the flats and one in the waves. My first session in the lagoon was just crazy. The spot was pretty empty at the beginning and the wind was light, but it got stronger and stronger, and we ended up being overpowered on our 4.2 MODE wings but decided to hold it and go into full send mode. I think the other riders must have seen our stoked faces because suddenly the spot was crowded, and all the kiters were staring at us. It seemed like Chucho and I were spreading the good vibes throughout the whole place!

“We really went all out, and pulled out our entire repertoire of tricks, plus tried new ones as well as taking some massive wipeouts. But that's what is all about, isn't it? My other magic moment of the trip was definitely a sunset wave session we did at an empty spot, 5km downwind from Westpoint. The wind and waves were pumping, we had solid 5 to 6ft waves rolling in and everything aligned for us. The conditions were on fire and Chucho and I didn't stop getting waves... right handers, left handers... you could choose what you wanted and it was getting better and better every time.

“Towards the end of the session, a few Dakhla fishermen appeared, floating on inflatable tires, which looked pretty crazy but this is how they fish. They were swimming between us sitting on the donut with a big lantern to see their way. Also, there was a group of old guys on the beach, having tea and praying. I remember that, as time went by, being in the water surfing waves, with the fishermen between us, the old men having tea at the beach and the light getting more and more beautiful, it just made me realise how beautifully authentic and amazing this experience was, and how happy I am to have the chance to be living such amazing experiences, traveling to such special places and experiencing different cultures.”

DUOTONE
UNIT

THE OUTER BANKS

SHORT STORIES OF
HIGH ADVENTURE

THE EDGE OF REASON

The last-minute arrival of a heavy Atlantic swell onto the shores of Cape Verde sharpened the wits and skills of pro rider Clement Roseyro and pro photographer Samuel Cardenas, as they made their way out into the beefy line-up…

PHOTOS **SAMUEL CARDENAS**

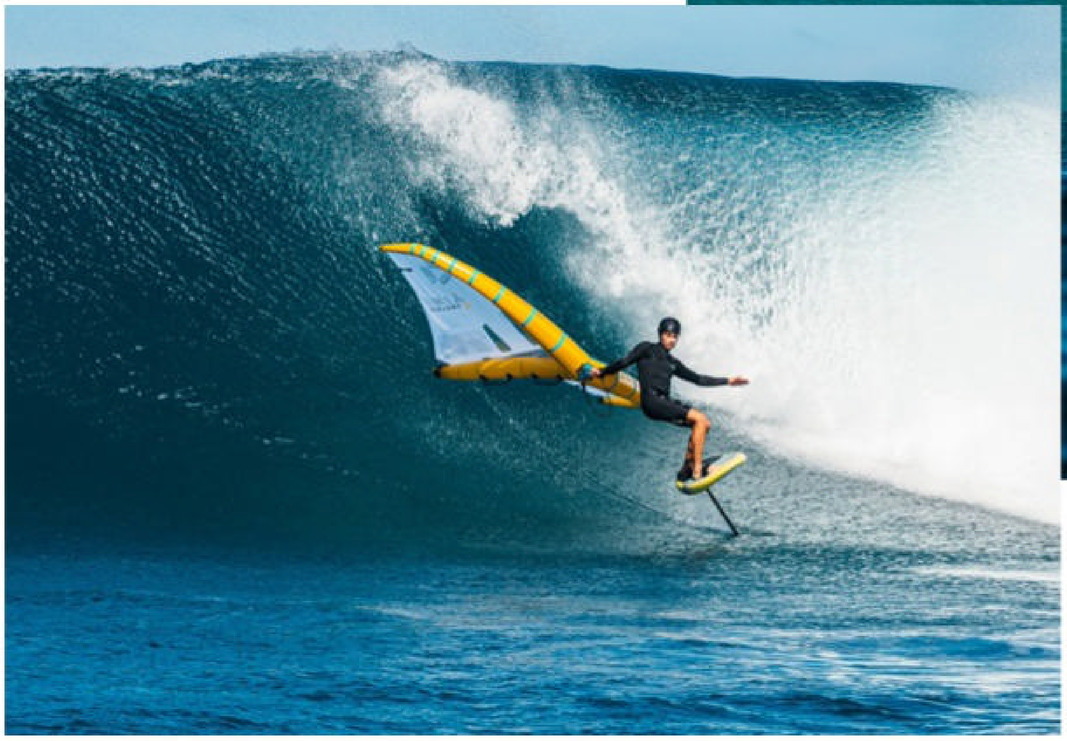
CLEMENT ROSEYRO

The day before there had been no waves, no sign of any swell until the sunset...

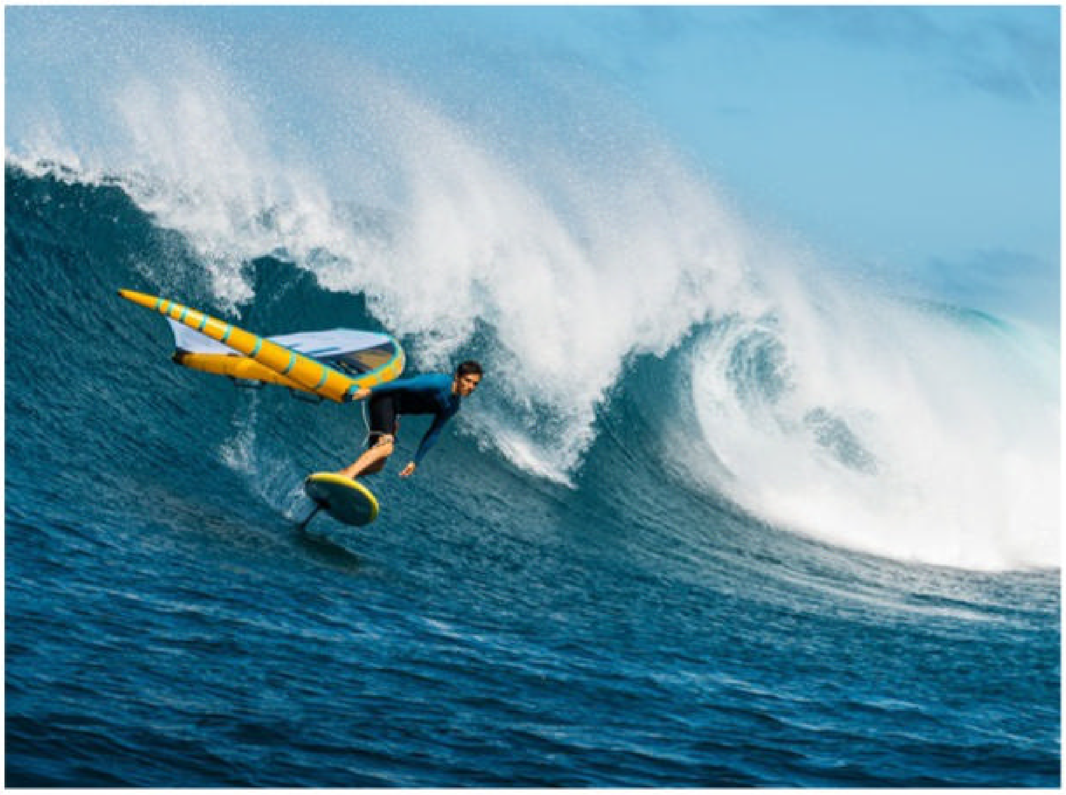
I tried to get a good night's sleep, but I woke around 6am, and headed to the beach at 6.30 with my friend Jerome Cloetens and photographer Samuel Cardenas. It was still dark, but we could hear the waves and saw the first wave closeout on the beach. The swell was there, clearly, but I didn't get any real idea of what the size of the waves outside might be. But I knew it was going to be big...

We prepared all the gear, but it was still not windy at all. Then at around 8.30am the wind started to pick up, so Jerome headed out on the water with the 5m wing. He paddled for 10 minutes before he found enough wind to get up and wing, as it was so light.

After a kilometer run downwind, I arrived at the line-up and had a look around. Jerome had crashed on his first wave and was furiously paddling out of the impact zone. I could feel the power of the waves that were in front of me. I had a quick check of my surroundings, and then I took my first wave. I was saying to myself, "Okay, today can either be THE day or the LAST day. So let's focus 100%."



My first wave was one of the biggest. I dropped into it like I was being towed into it, trying to get as much speed into it as I can. When I started my bottom turn, I didn't check if the wave was closing out or if I was too deep. When I finally checked, I was a bit late and a little too deep. I have the sensation that if I were to let go of my wing, I could get into the barrel. But with the wing leash on, it simply wasn't possible. The lip almost got me, but I made it!



I then get one that's even bigger than the one before, even more glassy, so I took the risk and went for it. The barrel was so gigantic! Square-ish, like a bus... I was as deep as foiling allows, right on the edge, with the seething white water right behind me. It was one of the biggest and heaviest waves I've ever had on a foil.

All in all, it might have been my best day of 2022. But now, in retrospect, I realize it was extremely dangerous; especially considering that the spot is in a remote location with barely any rescue or any safety procedures that a place like this definitely requires. We have to prepare better than that, just as we do when we surf in Nazaré or in the south of France. More planning ahead, and at the very least an impact vest and a helmet. In that size wave, having a leash on the board isn't a great idea, and the same goes for the one on the wing. It's a whole different ball game on slab waves like that.

Before we went out, I honestly didn't expect that we could ride so deep with a foil on such hollow waves! Now that we know it's possible, let's get out there again, let's push the sport of foiling further and further! Who' s in?

DUOTONE
UNIT
DUOTONE
UNIT

SAMUEL CARDENAS

(PHOTOGRAPHER)

A few years back, my good friend Jerome Cloetens went to Cape Verde in search of this giant wave to kitesurf. At the time, I had another job. I still remember the envy I felt when I saw the photos of that monster! I knew next time I would go, with no excuses, and so I did. However, this time we brought with us wing foils. At the point, I had no idea of the experience I was going to live out in that spot...

It all started with Jerome's idea, going to surf this monster of a wave with a wing and a foil. Everything was a bit improvised in the meantime, because we expected a big swell to show up at any moment. So we spent 10 days taking photos and videos in average wave and wind conditions, but the swell was still nowhere to be seen. In fact, it didn't arrive until just a few hours before we were due to leave for the airport for the flight back to Spain. It seemed like fate wanted us to stay.

The wave that Clement, Jerome and Wesley Brito had planned to surf was quite far out into the ocean, and the only way to reach it was by boat. As I was getting deeper and deeper into the sea, I could feel the force of the ocean and the waves growing stronger. My nerves started to settle in. Once we arrived, what I was feeling at that moment was beyond words... Such a huge body of water moving around, creating these perfect and beautiful structures. I got to see Mother Nature steaming towards us at full force.

It was a shame that we only got one session at that size, but it's something that I will never forget and, hopefully, we will return one day. ⋘

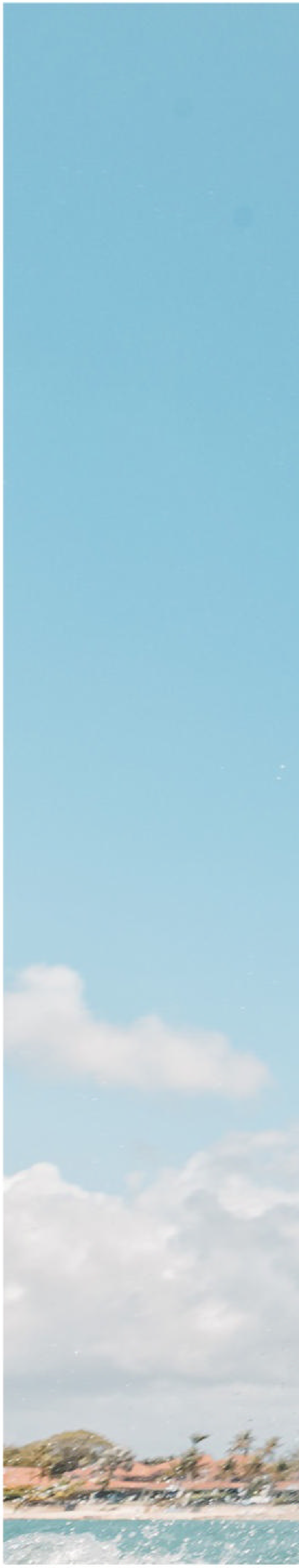
"AS I WAS GETTING DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO THE SEA, I COULD FEEL THE FORCE OF THE OCEAN AND THE WAVES GROWING STRONGER. MY NERVES STARTED TO SETTLE IN."

TECHNOLOGY & TERMINOLOGY

DYNAMICS

IMPACT RESISTANCE WITH RRD

There’s always been a bit of a battle between functional and strong materials, and keeping boards light and agile… and with hard use comes hard knocks. This is an aspect of board design that Italian foil brand RRD have embraced and tackled head on. With the release of their new Beluga LTD board, they think they’ve nailed it. We spoke with the team to get more info…



RRD
BE
LUGA
55
LTD

RRD
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LUGA
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LTD

> "AS WE KNOW, NOBODY WANTS A BOARD THAT BREAKS WITHIN A FEW MONTHS OF USE, BUT NOBODY WANTS A HEAVY BOARD EITHER..."

Given the very nature of the sport, especially in competition, hard knocks are pretty much a constant. Was impact resistance something you'd heavily researched prior to the wingfoiling boom?

Hard knocks are certainly a reality in wing foiling. It comes with the territory of this water sport and something that has also been a "trial & test" process in improving our boards. The issue mainly involves pro riders whose jumps cause the greatest stress and damage to the boards. RRD has a long history of producing windsurf boards in all types of construction technologies... with the advent of foiling we faced a new era and new challenges, which has helped us evolve in our wing board production technology.

Is it generally a problem you see amongst average riders, or is it a pretty concentrated "pro rider" problem?

Yes, at the moment it is a problem we see mainly with the pro riders as they are always trying and training the bigger moves. Pro riders are the forerunners of the sport, so we do expect that they will always challenge themselves to improve their wingfoil skills but that also means it will test and highlight any issues we may encounter with the durability of the product, allowing us to tackle the problem and work on a solid and reliable technology for everyone to enjoy.

Where do you begin in testing materials against impact resistance? In the water or in the laboratory?

The most relevant tests are done in the water. Over the last two years wing foiling has had such phenomenal growth that when you thought you had solved the problem, another challenge arises because the maneuvers are becoming more and more radical and the execution of those maneuvers are happening at higher heights.

We worked and continue to provide a technology that has the best compromise between durability and light weight, and of course depending on the level of rider and the use, the technology varies according to the level of comprehension that a rider is expected to have related to his expertize. As we know, nobody wants a board that breaks within a few months of use, but nobody wants a heavy board either...

Has the popularization of hard-handled wings and use of harnesses increased the toll on boards?

Heavy toll on boards is mainly caused by big jumps that put the board's foil box under severe pressure, but also greater risks of delamination, to cracking and complete breakage. So far, we have not detected any relevant risks directly related to the use of rigid handles and harnesses. However, a wing with a boom or with rigid handles, or the use of a rigid hook on a harness will increase the risks of board damage compared to the use of soft handles or no harness.

How much time and how many different materials have you tested through to get to where you're at today?

We worked on several solutions to the foil box, which is enormously stressed both vertically and horizontally due to the enormous pressure given by the leverage effect of the foil. We also analyzed the core and the various stages of lamination of the board, testing both sandwich and monolithic construction technologies and layups, adding specific reinforcements on the parts most subject to stress. It's important to point out that every wing foil board that we produce has a 100% molded "SuperEPS" core, with a unique, compact and tight surface definition (skin finish) of the EPS beads, that are superior to any CNC-shaped EPS cores.

A tighter EPS core skin finish will result in a lower resin absorption during lamination, and a higher memory of the EPS surface, lowering the risks of surface fiber layup delamination.

Furthermore, the use of a PVC sandwich construction on the deck of the smaller models (from 65 down to 35 liters) becomes a bullet proof solution on any deck delamination caused by heel denting when the pros are pushing things to the max.

Any composite wing foil board that we produce has a specific Foil Plate attachment area that is being considered as the heart of the board durability. A sophisticated system of PVC stringers linking the bottom to the deck layers create a tough but lightweight reinforcement that ensures durability and performance. Tough and light!

You can tell us... is there one particular rider who is more prone to impacts than others?!

Ha! Typically, heavy riders who are over 80kg are the ones who have the most problems. Here at RRD, we have many that are over this weight and therefore we have approached the issue comprehensively.

The new Beluga LTD is your most recent wingboard. Tell us how this is optimized against impacts...

We went through two years of testing and more than 30 prototypes. All these tests and breaks that we encountered led us to precisely identify the weak points, and we were able to concentrate on those with appropriate dedicated reinforcements. The Beluga LTD is the pinnacle of this research.

Have you augmented the shape of the board much for more robustness or is it simply a material and layup change?

The new shape of the Beluga LTD is designed to improve performance. Its reduced length allows an enormous increase in maneuverability and the recessed deck shape is a key feature of the board which, despite being short, allows you to float and take off very early due to the generous volume in the nose but also an excellent feeling of the foil being thinner on the step area. The only way to work on the durability was to optimize the layup of the deck and the foil plate attachment area.

Have you stuck with the same core material as the standard board, or gone for a different foam?

We used a denser and more resistant foam which allowed us to modify the lamination technology. This new EPS allowed us to have a stronger core without using the sandwich technology.

What sizes will the LTD board come in? Are these generally more aerial and freestyle focused in their dimensions?

The new LTD models come in eight sizes, from the 35 litres up to 125 litres. The four small sizes (35, 45, 55 and 65L) are purely for surf and freestyle use while the bigger sizes are for surf and freeriding. However, the weight and the level of the riders better defines the type of use of each board model. Our extensive model range allows you to find the right board with the best technology of construction available in the world today. ⋘

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THE GOOD STUFF

PRODUCTS WE LOVE

01

OZONE FLY V1

Fresh onto the scene, Ozone's new Fly V1 wing reflects the stripped back approach preferred by contemporary wing designs, keeping it lightweight, easy to use and super-efficient. It also packs up small too, making this an excellent travel option.

02

LIFT3 F

Lift's new LIFT3 F eFoil is built using their proprietary fiberglass blend, making this a very stable, easy-to-ride platform that comes in at a lower price, and ships with their 'Light' or 'Full Range' batteries, providing 60 or 100 minutes rider time, respectively.

03

LEVITAZ BOOM 44

You only have to read Mathis Ghio's Red Letter Day slot this issue to check out his love for the full-carbon Levitaz Boom44. Voluminous enough to get you up and riding nice and early, but compact enough to be nimble and up for whatever you want to put it through.

04

SROKA HA1350 LIFT

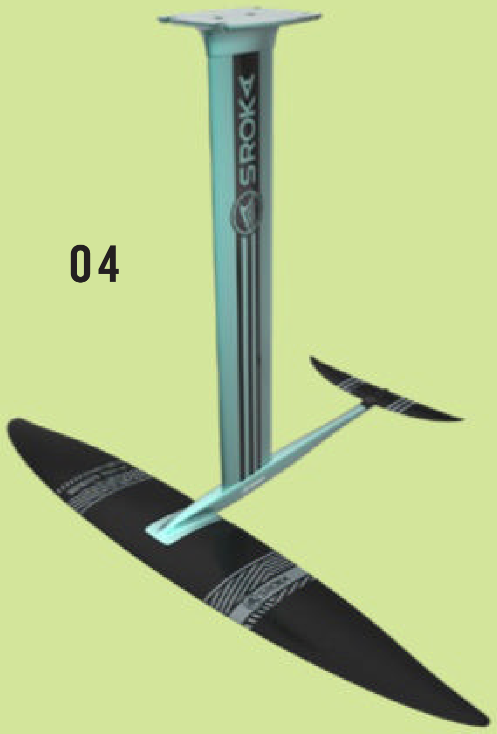
Sroka's HA 1350 Lift is a great all-rounder foil that's especially proficient in its downwinding capabilities, allowing easy and graceful sliding from one swell line to another, with the bare minimum rider input. Also just as happy out there with a wing or in the waves too.

01

02

03

04



FANATIC

RIDER Arthur Arutkin PHOTO Fish Bowl Diaries

ADDICTED TO RIDE

ENDLESS FLIGHT

The Downwinder was developed for one purpose only: To paddle on the foil as easy as possible and to surf any kind of swell as long as possible. The fascination of downwind foiling takes on a whole new dimension with this board.

FOLLOW US

DOWNWINDER
5'10", 6'2"

FANATIC.COM/SUP

THE GOOD STUFF

PRODUCTS
WE LOVE

05

WINGMAN VEST

There's a comprehensive test review of this vest in our Tested section, so you'll get the full knowledge over there. Suffice to say, it's not all that often that a really intelligent new product comes along that not only makes life easier but your time spent on the water even longer and more enjoyable. Bravo, Wingman.

06

RRD WIND WING

RRD's Y27 version of their popular Wind Wing has focused on stability and power distribution, with the bulk of the power focused along the center strut, giving you more control and huge amounts of boost waiting in the wings (sorry) for when you want to go stratospheric.

07

AK PHAZER V3 REFLEX CARBON FOILBOARD

A board we now immediately associate with Hawaiian ripper Zane Schweitzer, the Phazer is built in a nine-strong size range that's going to cater for all levels of foiling, across disciplines. And she's durable too, with that strong Reflex Carbon under your feet... Reliable.

08

FLITEBOARD ULTRA L

There's plenty more in this issue about the ULTRA L so we'll let you go discover that, but to summarize, the L stands for light, and it's called the Ultra for a reason. Comes with the Flitecell Nano battery, 80cm mast, the True Glide Prop and the recommended Flow 1100 wing, as seen here.

05

06

07

08

STILL LOOKING FOR YOUR MOJO?
MOJO
FLYSURFER
FLYSURFER
THEN LET US HELP YOU.
SIZES: 2.8 / 3.5 / 4.5 / 5.2 / 6.2 / 7.0
#FINDYOURMOJO
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PHOTO: MIRIAM JOANA | RIDER: LUKE MCGILLEWIE

THE GOOD STUFF

PRODUCTS
WE LOVE

09

CABRINHA VISION

An all-new wing appeared with Cabrinha's recent 03 drop, the Vision, developed by the brand's Cab Design Works Team and boasts the highest amount of dihedral in the brand's wing range, assisting in its upwind stability and reactive handling. Comes in a huge 10 sizes, from 2m to 8m.

10

UNIFOIL HYPER^2 250

Everything in the Hyper^2 range from Unifoil shouts high performance and speed, with plenty of upgrades from its Hyper predecessor... but the 250 in particular is gonna be your best friend in lighter winds, downwinders in light swells, and for elegant dock starts.

11

AFS ADVANCED PERFORMER MAST

Built using Ultra High Modulus carbon, AFS's new Performer Mast comes out of the brand's "Advanced" wing, meaning this is their top foil swag. 40% stiffer in torsion and 26% stiffer, the Performer allows for more control, better pumping performance and more efficient glide.

12

FLYSURFER MOJO PURE

The MOJO Pure is Flysurfer's stripped back edition of their popular MOJO wing, retaining all the key ingredients but removing other bits that you'll find in their regular MOJO, in favor of a reduced weight, more balance, and increased efficiency. Ideal option for those looking for a wing that just wants to power up and play!

09
CABRINHA
VISION

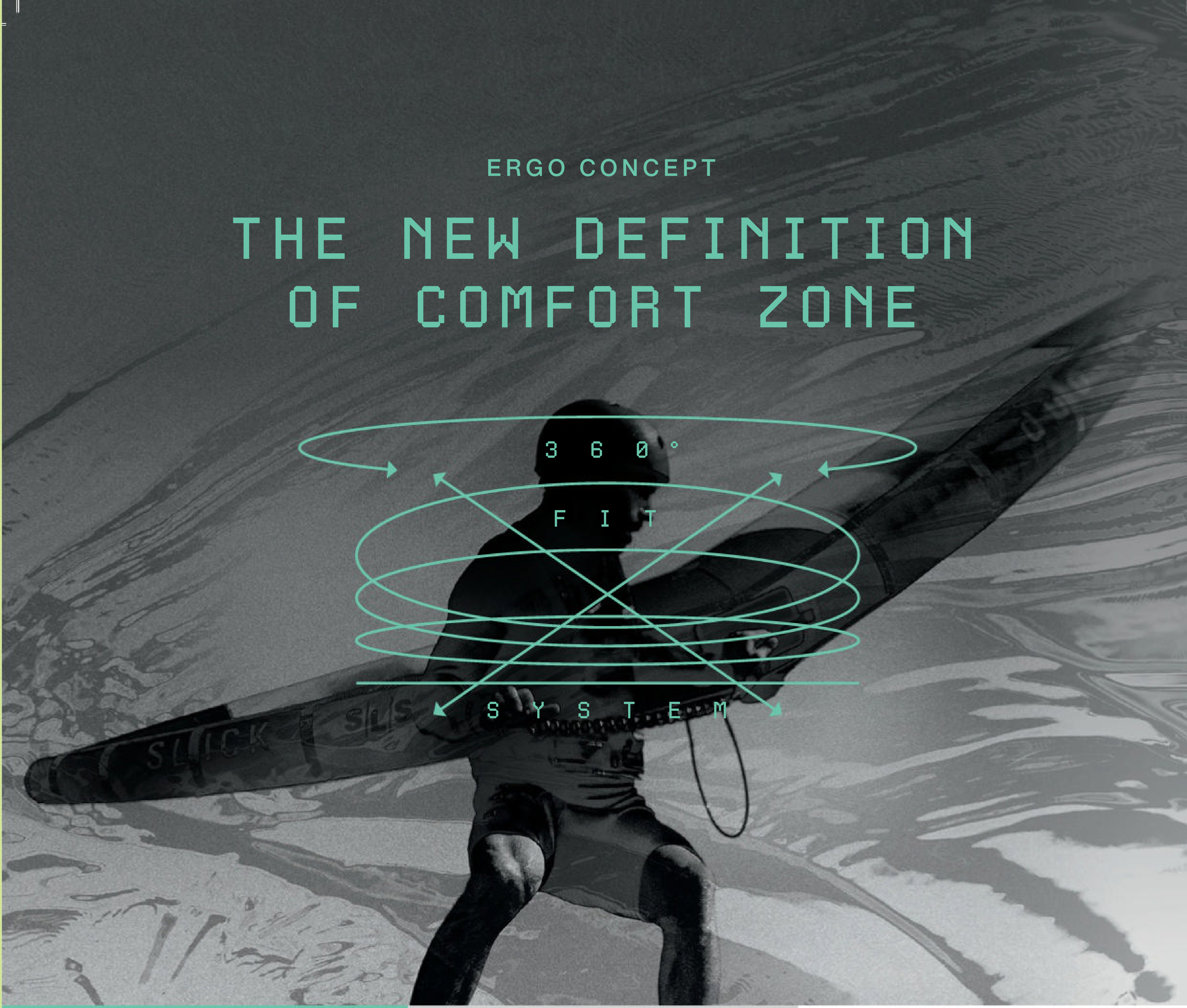
10
unifoil
hyper²

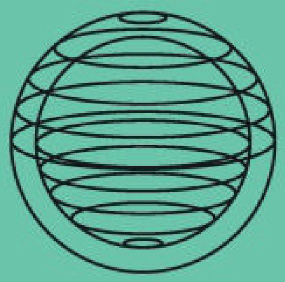
11
UHM CARBON 85 cm
AFS
Advanced

12
MOJO
FLYSURFER
7.0

ERGO CONCEPT

THE NEW DEFINITION OF COMFORT ZONE





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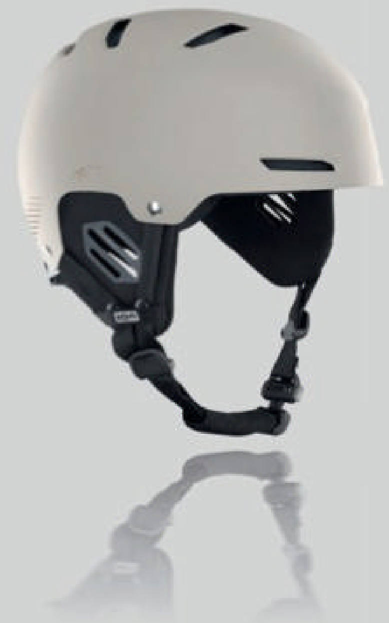


SLASH AMP

SURFING ELEMENTS

THE FIJI FACTOR

Despite having been “friends online” for some time, Adam Bennetts and James Jenkins – arguably two of the world’s best prone foilers – hadn’t crossed paths in person, until circumstance delivered them both to the Fijian archipelago at the same time, along with grade-A conditions...

PHOTOS **PHOTOS RAY COLLINS (UNLESS SPECIFIED)**

James Jenkins

"Bula!" – the first word you hear as you step off the plane in Nadi. As you wait in the baggage claim for your boards to come out, you can usually identify the other people that are heading to Namotu Island in Fiji. Just look for the most stoked people standing at the oversized luggage section. We are greeted by the friendly mainland staff from Namotu, who load up all of our gear into a truck. That is the last you see of it until it has conveniently arrived at your room on the island, just before you do.

The boat ride to Namotu from the mainland takes about 30 minutes or so, and when you get there you are greeted by the most beautiful voices, as the staff sing their Bula welcome song. I have been a surf guide/lifeguard on the island for about five years and the Fijian greeting never gets old. After a short introductory meeting, everyone hits the water for the first session of their choosing. Namotu has a fleet of longboats that will take you anywhere you want to go, at any time.

I arrived on the island a few weeks before Adam and Wilko did, for their "Weekend at Wilko's" Surf and Foil Week, which gave me some time to get settled in and get some sessions under my belt. Tom Carroll and Dave Kalama were on the island for one of Dave's Kalama Kamp weeks, so getting to share some foil session with those legends was awesome. In fact, Dave actually gave me my first foil lessons, six years ago, right here on Namotu.

Life on the island is pretty dreamy. With a variety of reefs and breaks, there is usually something fun to do at all times of the day. If you aren't in the water, there are yoga sessions, massages, pool/hot tub, and two different bars on the island. When you're on Namotu, you can do as much or as little as you like. If the surf isn't cooking, then the foiling waves are fun, or the wind is on for a wing or kite session. It really is just nonstop fun for the ocean enthusiast. Oh, yeah, and the cocktail hour every day is a highlight...Noah makes the best margaritas I have ever had down at the Sunset Bar. The real beauty of Namotu though is how it brings people together from all over the world that all share a common passion for the ocean and having a good time. I think this pairs perfectly with foiling. People who foil do it because it really is just that fun. It may not yet be entirely accepted in the surf world, and it sure gets its fair share of hate online, but it's a sport which doesn't have to be taken too seriously, which is why I love it. This was no better highlighted than by the arrival of Adam Bennetts and Matt Wilkinson, when they stepped onto the island for their surf/foil week. Their athletic ability speaks for itself, but these are two of the most epic and fun guys I have ever gotten to hang out with. I have a feeling we will be spending quite a lot of time together on Namotu in the future...

PHOTO: BEN TAYLER

Adam Bennetts

Surely Namotu Island could be mistaken for Heaven on Earth. Arriving at Nadi airport, you're instantly greeted with warmth in multiple aspects – warm air, warm smiles, and an all-around warm vibe. This was my very first time visiting Fiji and I could not believe I hadn't been here before as it is so close to home, relatively speaking.

Wilko (Matt Wilkinson) and I had decided to host a surf/foil experience, offering coaching and video analysis to our guests. And what better place to do it. Before our guests arrived, we had one spare day and, boy, it didn't disappoint. We were greeted with 6-10 foot perfectly groomed lines touching all the reefs, from Cloudbreak to Castaways. The launch of Fliteboard's Series 3 was coming up and so we booked a boat from the mainland and loaded it up with our gear. The cool thing about the Namotu region is that every break is accessible by water and most places are no more than a 20-minute boat ride away.

Wilko and I spent our first morning whipping ourselves into some solid nuggets at Love Shacks, a random bunch of peaks in between Swimming Pools and Namotu Lefts. Usually no one surfs it because it's a wide-open canvas and you need some sort of assistance to get into the right spot, so it was perfect for putting Fliteboard's Series 3 Ultra L and Pro to the test. There were some crazy moments, one in particular where I found myself caught inside on an 8-foot set and ended up in the lagoon, swimming for my Fliteboard. We spent three hours whipping ourselves in and probably caught 50 waves each. That first session certainly got the blood flowing, and was a pretty inspiring introduction to this beautiful island.

I've been talking to James Jenkins for years now, but up until this moment we had never actually met. He was one of my many 'Instagram' friends made during the pandemic, and when I finally set foot on Namotu, he handed me a margarita and we were instantly vibing. Not only does the guy absolutely shred on the foil, but he's also one of the nicest guys you'll ever meet.

This week, we somehow lucked out and had high tides in the middle of the day and super light winds, so our daily routine was pretty damn good. Sleep in, have a mid-morning breakfast, yoga, ice bath, plenty of coffee, and then load the boats and skis at 10am and do four hours of tow and prone foiling before the tide got too low. It was amazing to see how much everyone improved throughout the week as I offered "on-the-fly" coaching whilst following the guests about with the GoPro, which would then be analysed later that night over a few Fiji bitters.

One of the most memorable moments from the week was when James and I did a lap of Namotu, which you can see on my YouTube channel. We went doubles on the rope and Kerry whipped us in at the top of Namotu Lefts. We both rode down the line, trading off on sections and into the lagoon. We got to the corner of the island and there was plenty of energy in the swell and so I just thought, let's go around the island. Once we got around the corner and to the bottom of Mini Pools, it was a bit of a slog pumping, but we made it all the way to the boat house on the complete opposite side of the island. It is such a trip watching the footage back and comparing where we started and finished.

On one of the last mornings on the island, the tides were super low in the morning and James was on the ski, lifeguarding at Pools. It ended up getting too low for the intermediate surfers and he gave me the heads up that there was an epic little window opening up... He came and scooped me up on the beach and we went back out just as the last surfers were heading in. We were fortunate enough to have Ray Collins as the island photographer for our week and he just happened to be out there shooting the guests. He ended up staying out there and shot one of the funnest sessions I've ever had. It was so cool to see what James could do with his straps, throwing several backflips with ease. Super impressive!

What a spot, what a trip. Wilko and I will be doing another Surf / Foil experience this year in November, so keep an eye on wilkosworld.com.au out to book your spot. ⋘

The Emerald HIGHWAY

There were a lot of moving parts in play as members of the Duotone and Fanatic wing team departed Germany in multiple campervans, setting out on a road trip toward the most westerly shores of Europe. Sadly, for one such member, the trip never even really got started. But for the rest, the (not so) wide open roads of Ireland beckoned...

WORDS **HENNING NOCKEL**
PHOTOS **SIMON CROWTHER (UNLESS SPECIFIED)**

My first ever road trip was when I was 18. My childhood friend Basti Langer and I went to Copenhagen on a skate trip. I remember we drove there in my mom's old VW Golf, she pretty much leant it to everybody that had a license, even friends of my sister and I. The entire trip we only listened to one record: Young MC's Cold Stone Rhymin'. It was the only record (tape) we took to Copenhagen. It was chaotic and wild... lots of skating, and we slept in the car. I will never forget it.

32 years and a lot of road trips later, I am driving a very different vehicle to Ireland. It's a brand-new campervan that we just picked up at the Dethleffs office in Southern Germany, which we're supposed to spend the next two weeks in with a few other members of the Fanatic and Duotone wing team.

Prior to this, Klaas Voget (head of R&D and Marketing at Fanatic and Duotone) and I had to travel from the very north of Germany all the way down to Munich to meet up with the film crew and to pick up the latest Fanatic boards and Duotone wings. From there, we left the next day with a convoy of two Dethleffs campervans and Klaas' own van and headed in the direction of Paris. The plan was to pick up our French team rider Clement Roseyro and the Cape Verdian, Wesley Brito. The only problem was that Wesley arrived at the southern airport in Paris, while Clement showed up at the northern airport, both pretty much at the same time, and late at night. Luckily, being night-time, the traffic wasn't too hectic. We decided to split up so that Klaas could pick up Wesley, while the film crew and I could go get Clement, and we could all meet later that night outside Paris to find a safe spot to camp for the night.

It was great to see Clement when we picked him up at the airport. He'd already been waiting for us for over three hours, but he is always so chill – when we arrived, he just smiled and hopped into the car. I know Clement from last year's Mauritius trip, he is always super fun to hang out with, always positive, and great company! So we got chatting right away and meanwhile the driving flew by, right up until we caught up with Klaas and Wesley outside of Paris. Everybody was tired, so we slept for a few hours and then continued our journey the next morning, hoping to make it in time to get our ferry. Having made it through the night, we stopped at a truckstop at one point to get some food. Wesley had a packet of spicy crisps and a big Monster energy drink for breakfast... I laughed so much when I saw that. I'd never met Wesley before, but we'd been in touch a lot via Instagram, and it was great to finally meet him in person... He's a huge guy, but has this really endearing, child-like friendliness.

When we finally arrived at the port we were already running a little late, but we figured it would be ok, since there were still several cars going through the customs checks behind us. We checked in and needed to swap between vehicles so the lady at the check-in could register us all to the vans we were booked on. All of a sudden she looked at Klaas, and asked him where Wesley's visa was for Ireland. Wesley had a visa, and he was totally confident that it was all good. Except the problem was, Wesley only had a visa for the Schengen countries around Europe... which does not include Ireland. We'd never checked that, and we assumed Wes had. We had a problem.

Photo: Klaas Voget

Photo: Henning Nockel

Photo: Klaas Voget

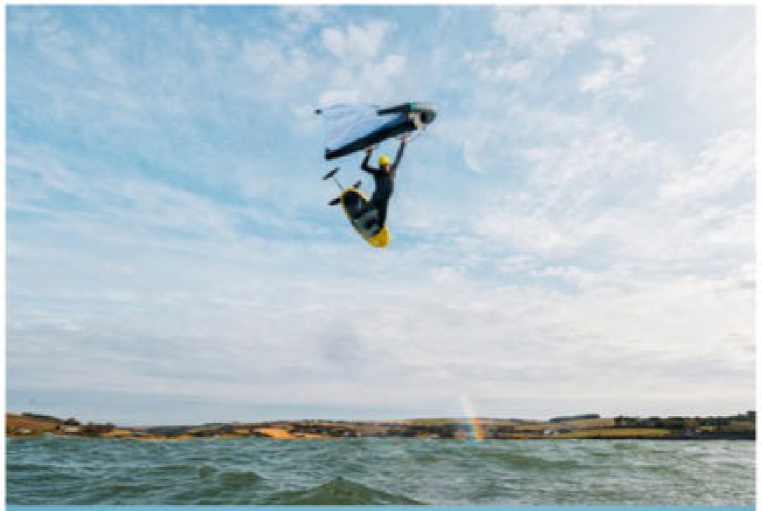


Photo: Henning Nocke

We only had five minutes to get on board the boat or to stay behind. It was a tough one, we tried calling the French distributor to help us out, but they only confirmed that there was no way we were getting Wesley on the ferry. We had to make a quick and sad decision… we had to leave Wesley at the harbor. We couldn't do anything more for him than give him money for the taxi and train so he could get back to Paris, to try and apply for the visa there. It felt wrong to leave him behind, but to stay with him would have meant we'd have lost the booking for three vans and cabins on the ferry – a couple thousand Euros – so we needed to go! We hugged our friend and said our goodbyes.

Even though it was smooth sailing to Ireland, we felt we couldn't really enjoy it and throughout the whole time we were trying make a plan on how to get Wes back to us. Klaas made a lot of phone calls to his office and to customs and so on. But it seemed like there was no way to get Wesley to Ireland. Visas usually take a couple of weeks. Klaas was questioning whether we'd made the right decision to leave him there. But we all agreed there was nothing we could do at that moment, and meanwhile there were two more members of the team on their way from Tarifa in Spain, heading for Dublin airport, and photographer Si Crowther was also en route on a ferry from Great Britain. So we just had to go.

When we arrived in Dublin, we camped out at a local mall parking lot to wait for Si. Two hours later, Klaas and I went to pick up Nia Suardiaz and Jerome Cloetens at the airport. At that time, I didn't know that Nia was half German, so I talked in English with her from the airport arrivals lounge to the car, where suddenly Klaas started talking German to her. We laughed and they made fun of me… fair enough I figured!? Once Jerome had arrived a little later, we hit the road together and made headway for the west coast of Ireland without delay, since the forecast was showing that the next day would hold the biggest chance of wind and waves for most of the trip.

Ireland was nothing like I was expecting it to be. I had heard so much about big storms, cold wind, rainy, shitty weather and massive seas. But it happened to be nice and sunny on almost every day of the trip. We never got a storm, and the waves were medium sized at maximum. The landscape was truly incredible though, even more wild, green and fascinating then I had ever imagined.

We did a lot of driving from west to east and from north to south and back again, scoring a lot of sessions along the way, and visiting a lot of bars and drinking a lot of Guinness. We saw beautiful rainbows, endless green hills, wild beaches, rough coastline and super narrow roads. The people were extraordinarily friendly, and the food was great. Even the truckstop coffees were good. We grew together as a team, even though we never got Wesley back, which was sad! But he ended up in Mauritius for a private shoot, because it was easier to fly him there than back to Ireland so then we didn't feel quite so bad…

We had hoped for more wind and wilder waves, but it was great seeing all these different spots. A road trip will always hold the unexpected. It's the unknown that makes a trip like that such a success, but it can also wear you down too. It can get to a point where it feels like it's repeating itself and you can feel stuck at times, but that's big part of the journey and even the wildest things can get you somewhere. The road saw us lose a friend before the trip even really started, it saw us get into arguments over dinner decisions, but it also found us empty spots and unexpected winds. It meant we met new friends and got invited into people's houses. The fact is, on the road we grew together, and I miss it and all of them now.

NO DOWN DAYS

Remember those days when you had to wait out hours, twiddling those proverbial thumbs while staring at the distant horizon, willing a decent swell to arrive just so you could get out and ride something? Thankfully, days like that are pretty much non-existent now thanks to foiling, and despite it having initially been the secondary option to kiting on Moona Whyte and Keahi's recent trip to Cabo Verde, it did manage to save the day until the next swell came along. And Cabo Verde being Cabo Verde, they were never going to be waiting long for something suitably solid...

WORDS **MOONA WHYTE**
PHOTOS **JAMES BOULDING**

We originally went to Cabo Verde as a kitesurfing trip. In fact, Keahi and I were so set on kiting that we only brought one foil setup between the two of us. Genius, I know. We needed some room for surfboards in our board bag in case of light wind, so the second foil board got the boot. We figured we'd mostly kite and could trade off playing around with the wing if it got small. Well I guess we were a little too optimistic on waves because we sure had a lot of days that, prior to foiling, we would have called "down days" (or I guess, half down days for us). But once again, foil (singular), saved the trip and turned the small days into some of the highlights.

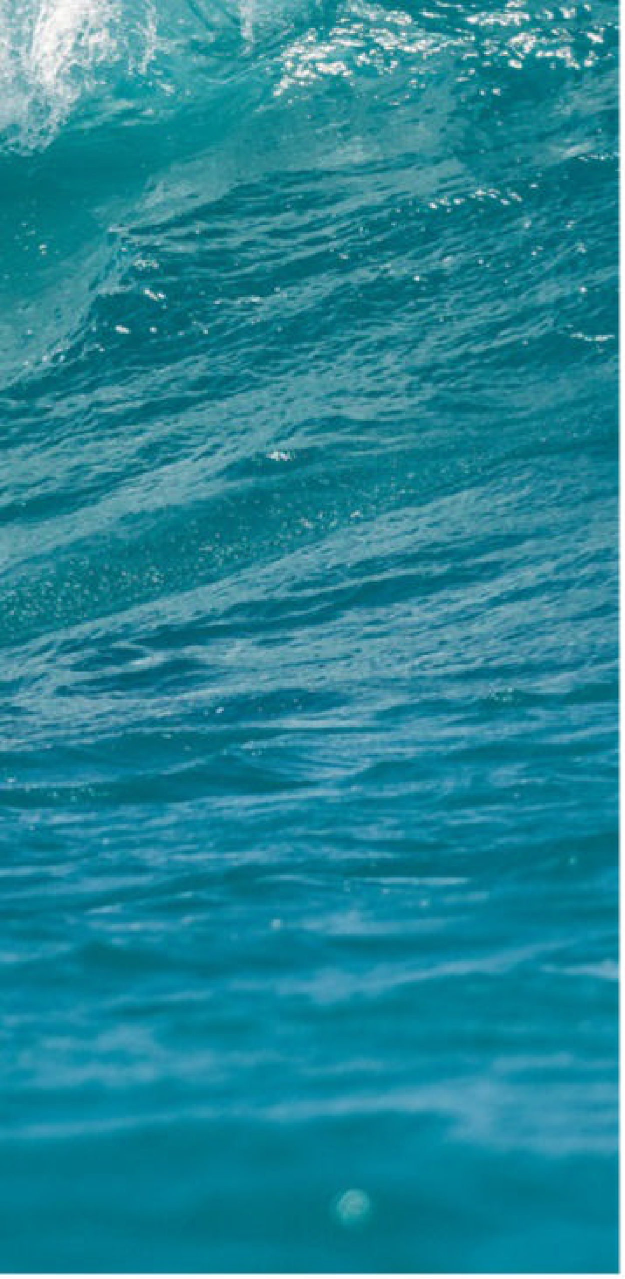
The local crew in Cabo Verde has some amazing foilers. They have nice rolling waves with wind that were perfect for them all to go from one-time foilers when we were there last, to pros when we returned three years later. They actually thanked Keahi for getting them started because their first time foiling was on one of Keahi's foils. Back then these waves weren't really on our radar since we weren't so into foiling. But now the sport and especially winging has opened up so many new spots, as well as opportunities for those who live near them which was very cool to see. We got to share a session with some of our friends from the island and it was a lot of fun. Keahi and I were sharing our foil, but he let me use it this time and he hopped on a kite instead. I think winging was the perfect call this day as it was a little offshore and the waves weren't too big.

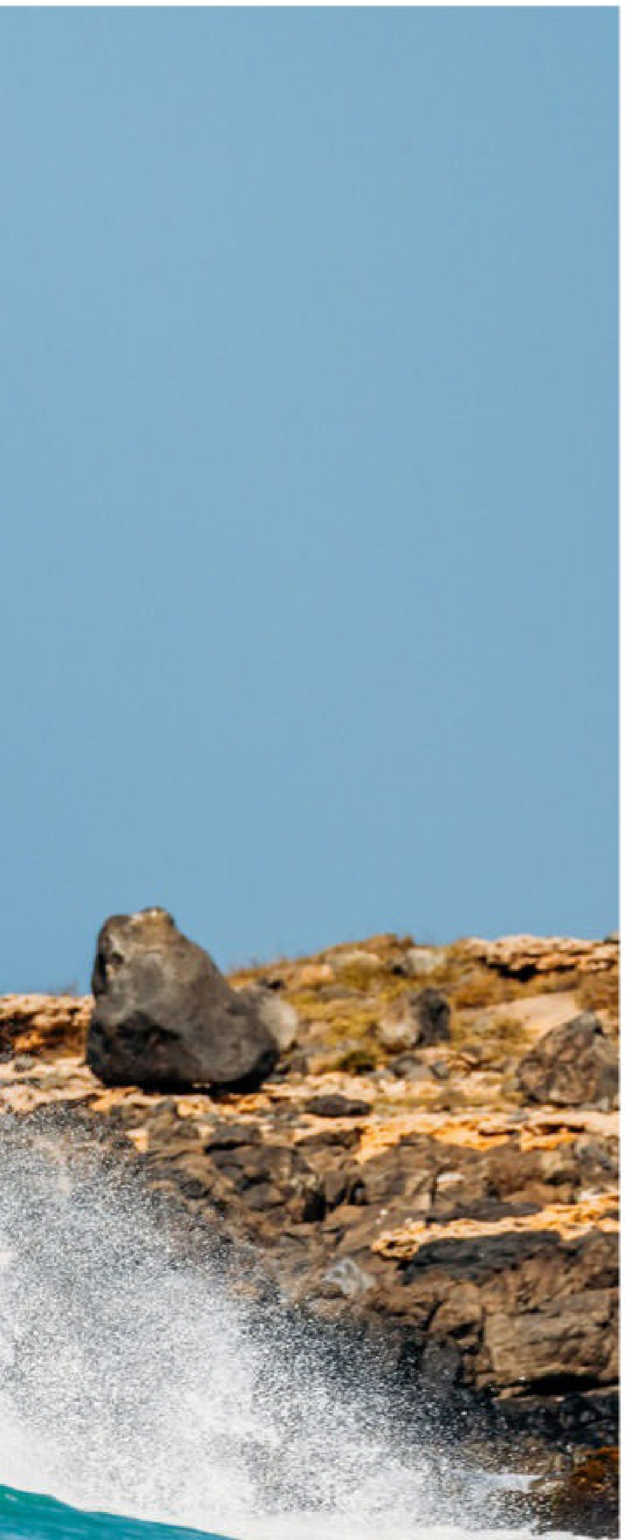
CABRINHA

CABRINHA

"Back then these waves weren't really on our radar since we weren't so into foiling. But now the sport and especially winging has opened up so many new spots, as well as opportunities for those who live near them which was very cool to see."

CABRINHA
MANTIS





CABRINHA

The swells were moving pretty fast at this spot until it hit the reef and then it had a nice steep section for turns. I was using the new H700 which felt really good; it turns with very little effort and is stable but still keeps you on your toes. I don't foil in waves over waist high very often but with this setup I could keep up with the speed of the swell and it felt no different to riding my usual baby waves. But the highlight was trying to party wave with Keahi on the kite. I almost got clothes-lined a couple times, but it kind of worked!

On another not-so-down day we decided to check out the small, uninhabited island next to us. We rode way out to sea where some big swells were rolling through. The wind was up and down. James, who was taking photos, took the boat on the inside of the lagoon where it was calm. Keahi raced it around the corner of the island, saying "watch out for the bombies on the outside" as he flew past. I saw the lighter blue sections of water and could tell those were the shallower spots where waves were breaking. I willed myself not to come down off foil or I may not be able to get a gust before a set came through. I wove my way through darker blue corridors, turned the corner, and made it to a peeling point off some rocks. The view was awesome with the offshore waves and a deserted island. There was no sight of civilization here.

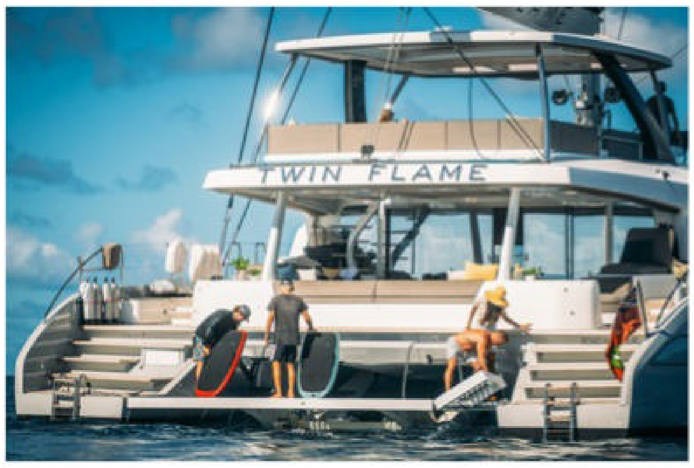
My favorite thing to do whenever I'm wind-powered in a new place is to explore it. Especially around cool little islands. With a kite I'm very limited to wind direction, fluky gusts and big lulls, but with the wing I can get as close as my mast is deep. Although, I also get easily distracted by waves, so I stayed out playing on the swells until it was time to go in for a big plate of cachupa (the national dish of Cabo Verde). The session that kept getting better kept giving until the very end: the way back to the beach we started from was only a couple tacks away! One tack sightseeing along the island, and one tack straight home. I never got around to the downwind side of the island, but that'll be an adventure for next time, hopefully with foil boards for both of us.

Red Bull
lift

CARIBBEAN GLIDE

The scope of foiling potential that sits in the Caribbean is often overlooked, with a multitude of islands and coves tucked out of view, waiting patiently for those who are willing and able to charter a boat and go hunting for them. And as Lift's Nick Leason knows well, there's more than enough out there to go around…

WORDS **NICK LEASON**
PHOTOS **RODRIGO DONOSO (UNLESS SPECIFIED)**


TWIN FLAME

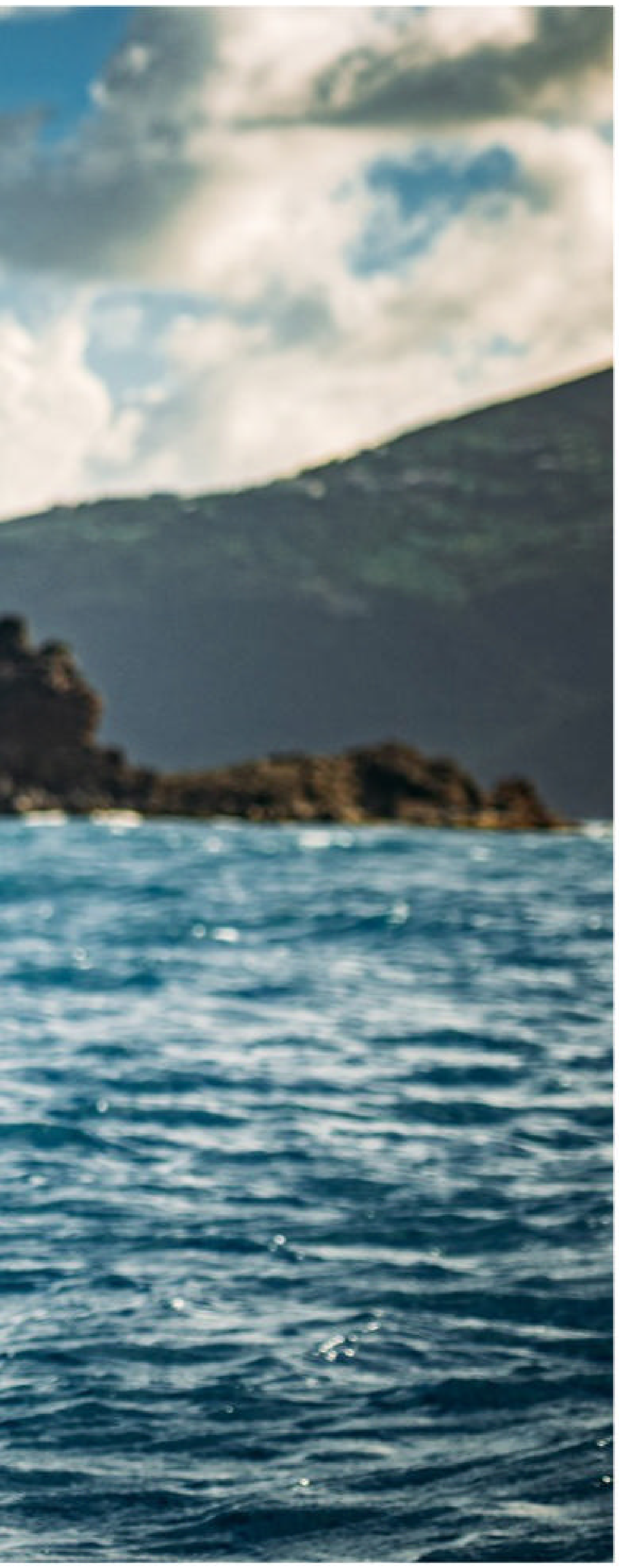
When you're a surfer and you think about taking a week-long surf trip on a boat, thoughts typically drift towards places like Indonesia. It's easy to charter a fishing boat there and surf some of the world's best waves with 40 others on the peak. It's a lot less likely that you'd think about heading to the US and British Virgin Islands, sitting peacefully in the southern latitudes, and creating a boundary between the mighty Atlantic and the warm waters of the Caribbean. Short of the world-class spots, like Cane Garden Bay, few immediately envision the area's unlimited surf breaks and incredible coves and beaches. This is both lucky and a shame, because with the help of the perfect vessel, the exploration of this place proved to be one of the best foiling experiences we've ever had...

The trip began when the Lift family set out on the Twin Flame, a weeklong sailing charter, along with owners Colin Guinn and Christy Woods, both adventure-seeking foiling enthusiasts. The sailing yacht is a 77' Lagoon and has every amenity, perhaps most notably the great staff of foilers. We started our trip in St. Thomas, arriving at an airport that sits right in between two beautiful harbors, with rising mountains to the north. Within minutes of arriving, we'd taken a short taxi ride, jumped onto a tender, and were on board with our shoes stowed away for the week. Our hearts were already racing while all the foiling gear was being rigged. An hour after arriving we were towing into head high waves right around the corner. Warm water, sun shining, nobody out...

The possibilities seemed endless. The primary swells for the area come from the north during the winter season. When the east coast is getting blasted with cold fronts and deep snow, the systems move out into the Atlantic, generating clean swells for the tropics, a few thousand miles away. Throughout the winter, three-to-six-foot swells are quite common, sometimes even coming into the eight-to-twelve foot range. When the storms up north are particularly spectacular, the south gets massive and yet remains absolutely clean. We knew that depending on what the weather did we could be in for some great adventure.

As it turned out, we were hit with less than average conditions and irregular winds. Part of the reason we were out there was to shoot our new 2023 Lift product lineup with our team of riders and photographers, so we were sort of nervous, but as it turned out, the surf was actually great. Just the feeling of discovering new places and being the only people out in the water, made us feel like legitimate explorers. We found tons of coves and reefs and, regardless of swell direction and wind conditions, we found we could always align ourselves in the right spots.

"IT WAS QUESTIONABLE WHO WAS HAVING MORE FUN, THE SURFERS OR THE TEAM ON BOARD LOOKING DOWN FROM ABOVE, AS BRIAN GRUBB PUT ON A SHOW WITH HIS LATEST MANEUVERS"



St. Thomas proved to be amazing. We hung with a bunch of local foiling addicts who joined us when the swell was overhead and we managed to catch some classic sessions at some of the better known left hand reef breaks. Pitchy, but not too hollow, the waves broke for a 100 meters or longer and allowed multiple bottom turns and a few high speed cut backs. Around the corner, we saw waves that had seldom been ridden, but that showed promise for long rides running parallel down the coasts of the small surrounding islands.

With so many islands scattered in the area, all sailing destinations are within a few hours or less and we were breezily able to make our way further east to St. John, where the current weather conditions were more suitable. St. John is about 75% national park and has tall green mountains that tower over incredible white sand beaches. It almost makes you feel like you might have stumbled into a Caribbean version of Tahiti, and in typical Tahitian form, it also offers outer reefs that are accessible by boat, with left hand slabs breaking into wide open channels. Again, we were able to sail up to this optimal surf setting and find that we were the only ones in it.

The Twin Flame put us right in the channel using its bow thrusters and created the ultimate venue for the family and friends watching from the second story crew deck. It was questionable who was having more fun, the surfers or the team on board looking down from above, as Brian Grubb put on a show with his latest maneuvers. The surf was wrapping around the reef, favoring the left handers, but also looking promising on the right. It was a very shallow area and going too deep threatened punishment if you weren’t able to make it out, but we pulled in deep, raced down the line, made a few bottom turns on the outside shoulder and then went into some classic high speed cutbacks as the waves wrapped around. On the inside, both the left and right sides of the waves had traveled around the reef to collide into each other, making for a few interesting inside carves with some serious backwash.

"AS A RIDER, YOU FEEL LIKE YOU COULD SURF THROUGH THE ISLANDS FOREVER, WITH NOT A CARE IN THE WORLD, TO PUERTO RICO AND BEYOND..."

After St. John, we sailed upwind to the British Virgin Islands, arriving first in Virgin Gorda. We took advantage of the short trek and rode our eFoils alongside the yacht until we got to the Baths, a spectacular land formation of massive volcanic boulders piled on top of perfect white sand/crystal water beaches. It's a magical place to ride eFoils and explore the miles of coastline and the features below the water. We spent a few days foiling, diving, hiking and nourishing our bodies with incredible food and company.

As our trip geared towards the final days, we sailed back downwind past Tortola. It was either a four-hour sail on the boat or four hours of prone downwinding with an incredible chase boat by our side. We decided to surf down the north coast, which is open to the Atlantic, and ride the easterly swells that were being generated by the trade winds, averaging 15-18 knots. As a rider, you feel like you could surf through the islands forever, with not a care in the world, to Puerto Rico and beyond. We talked about it being a great spot to do a Caribbean version of the Molokai paddle race, island hopping from one paradise to another. We passed the most beautiful landscapes, countless point breaks and coves, and marked a bunch of them for future adventures. Even though for now we were just sailing smoothly down the coast, we were growing excited to come face to face with the many northerly swells delivered in our winter season and some of the best right handers in the world.

Everyone was on cloud nine as the trip came to an end. We all recognized the immense potential for never-ending surf on some of world's best waves, untapped in a tropical paradise. Everything was made even better by being aboard the Twin Flame. It's always a pleasure to meet new people through such a fun sport. We left a few toys behind and agreed that this time next year, or when the swells peak and the yacht is free, a strike mission would be in effect. Now that the tools were in place, we could continue the exploration and discover other gems, just 30 nautical miles from the place we call home...

Photo: Bradford King

THE KINGDOM OF DAL RIATA

Scotland: a fascinating, mystical land of castles, rainbows, and wild seas. Last November, the AFS team set off on an expedition to film a downwinder mission amidst this unique setting. Although the elements were occasionally challenging, the opportunity to be so immersed in nature throughout the trip made it unlike any other they'd experienced.

WORDS **PAUL WAKELIN**
PHOTOS **CHRISTIAN BROWN**

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WE ARE Here! :)
ON 10.30am
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The Facebook post jumped out at me… "Join us on a 102ft tall ship, sailing through Scottish waters for a week in search of the best downwinder routes suitable for the weather of the day. Wingfoil amongst waves, whales and rainbows." I was sold, instantly. Personally, I was itching to take on the developing discipline of downwinding amongst a group of like-minded enthusiasts under the guidance of two practiced Oban locals, Andy Corbe and Patrick Winterton. I was looking for a wingfoil, downwinding shunt. Little did I know at that time, how that desire would fully take shape and develop.

Over the following couple of months, I took up the fantastic opportunity to come onboard with AFS, one of Europe's leading Carbon Foil manufacturers. Joining the AFS team further fueled the fire – the desire to downwind had intensified. Now amongst equally enthusiastic wingfoil professionals, the foundations for a bespoke Scottish AFS team trip were well and truly set. So in early November 2022, we all headed north… In planning conversations with Andy, he further shared the region in which they now lived (and chased waves within) – the ancient kingdom of Dal Riata.

Dal Riata was an ancient Gaelic kingdom that encompassed the seaboards of western Scotland and northeastern Ireland on each side of the North Channel. At its height in the 6th and 7th centuries, it covered what is now Argyle, most of the Inner Hebrides and part of County Antrim in Northern Ireland. Open seas, sounds and locks were the main means of transportation, and by necessity, it was a highly skilled and knowledgeable seafaring culture. Today the area is still absolutely, uniquely stunning. Our AFS riders were now set to ride those same waves on very different craft, joining local riders with a mutual love of the unique seascape and a fascination for the history. Over the trip we were also further testing the concepts of downwinding under SUP and wing foil, with the awesome Blackbird, the brand new AFS downwinding board, all in front of the camera. On top of that, Alan Fedit continually let rip with aerials in a most un-downwind like fashion, because he could… Then there was the depth to our on-water team, local chargers and guides Andy and Patrick, along with Keith from Calshot and Sarah from Dale in Wales. Christian, our cameraman and also a rider, like I, ironically only had one brief session over the week. There was just too much to do to capture the event. Clement, AFS Director and lead cameraman is a specialist, and simply enjoyed the show from behind the lens.

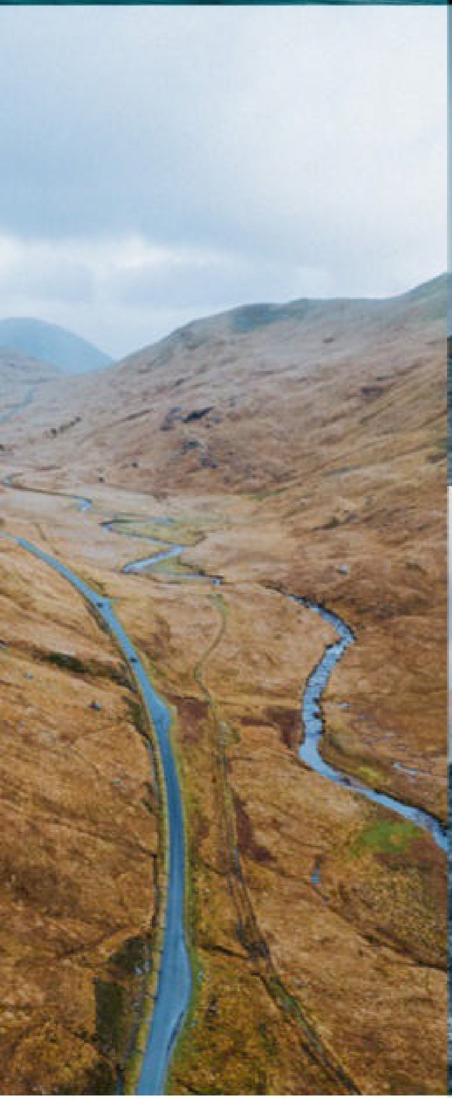
There was also a personal challenge behind the trip for downwind expert and AFS' International Business Manager, Richard Boudia: to explore the world through downwinding and travel amongst the most beautiful places on Earth. He confirmed that the Scottish coast is now definitely one of them.

> “I have always been fascinated by Scotland, its wild landscapes, its castles, its legends and of course its highland cows... I think we all feel very lucky to have been able to discover this magnificent place amongst fully motivated enthusiasts. Letting the swell be your guide, the experience of gliding through the air is all the more unique when you are surrounded by such a mesmerizing landscape.”
>
> **RICHARD BOUDIA**

> "We were able to discover beautiful landscapes and the perfect sailing conditions allowed us to go out on the water every day and to enjoy it to the full. As we crossed the country, we soaked up the local culture, from breakfasts in Scottish pubs, to meeting the famous highland cows."

ALAN FEDIT

> “For this trip we had to make some sacrifices, notably on our sleep and letting Bruno Andre drive the truck for both of the 12-hour drives, but I'm very happy to have captured a great surf foil session at sunset, to have met this beautiful team...”
>
> **CLEMENT NICOLET**



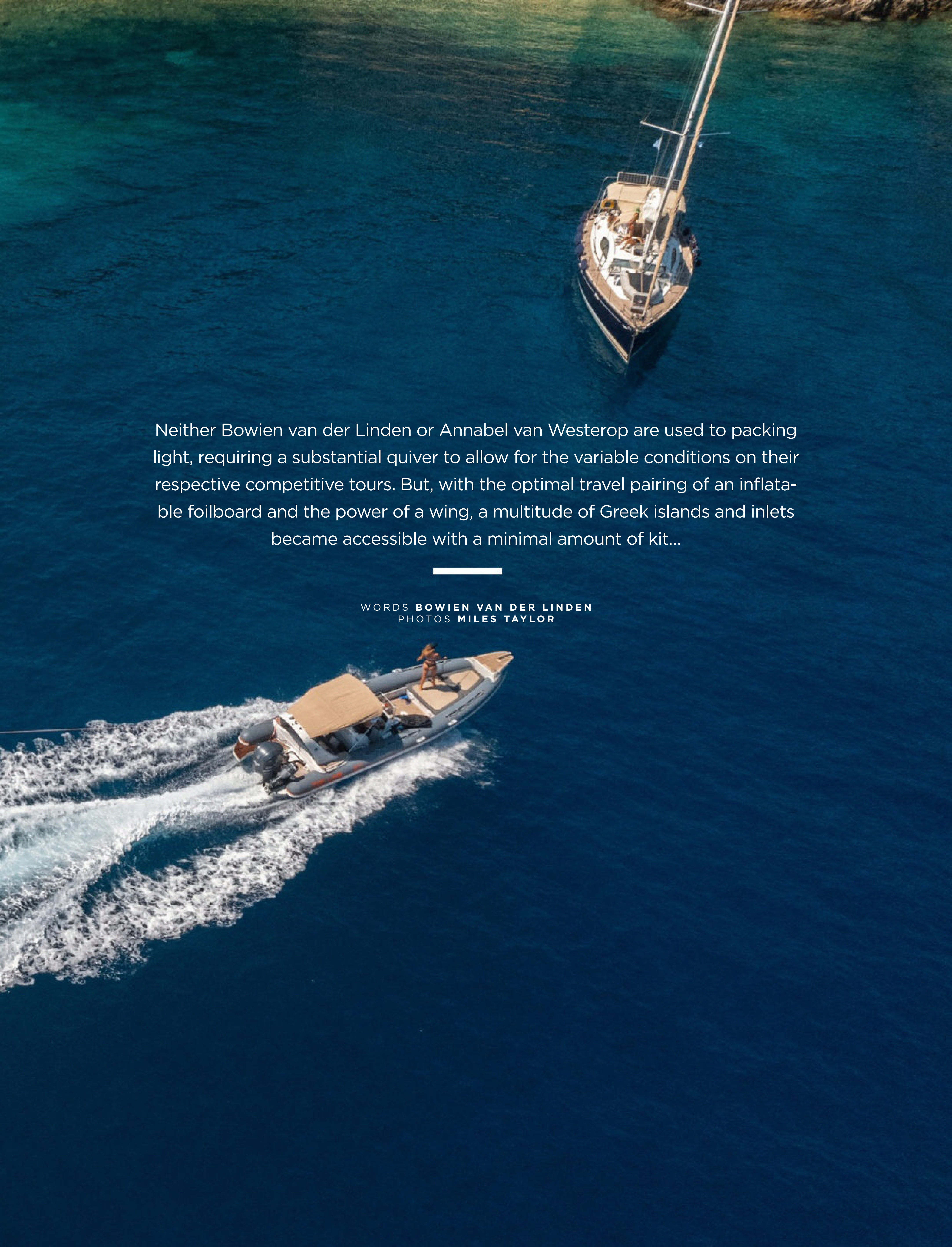
As ever, we are at the mercy of the weather, thankfully mild for the time of year, and the winds truly delivered. Early excitement and build up led to a perfect 30km downwinder route, from Easdale to Oban. Then the wind swung to the SE and increased, heralding a storm that was best tackled on Loch Fyne. A further 16km downwind in 50 knot squalls against an outgoing tide, all in torrential, driving rain. Unfortunately, none of the footage was suitable for the final film although the tales, experiences and adventures of that particular day will stay with us all. We then diverted to Dunadd (Gaelic “Dún Ad”) meaning "fort on the river”, a hill fort, in the area of Argyll and Bute, dating from the iron age. It is believed to be the capital of the ancient kingdom of Dal Riata, a seat of the kings. It was great taking it all in. When the storm passed, the wind disappeared, the sun came out and a little swell remained. Although not specifically what we traveled north for, a memorable surf foil sessions was scored at Machrihanish, all within sight of Northern Ireland, just across the channel.

Our final day of filming took us from Oban, across the Isle of Mull to Iona, with all of us visitors totally unaware of the breathtaking scenery we were crossing in the darkest of mornings before sunrise. It was one of the best breakfasts I have ever had and certainly the only one I had risen at 3am for! The aim of the day was to search out crystal clear green waters to add to our footage. This was not to be, however we did score a fun session in a dropping breeze at the tiny Isle of Ioan, beautiful and remote yet an ancient center of learning and religion. These remote Islands had a greater population in ancient times than they do today. The Highland scenery on the drive back to the mainland was simply breathtaking, stunning... words fail it. Back in Oban, Patrick kindly hosted us for a final evening’s BBQ, including scallops he’d retrieved from the seabed himself. Highland cows, rainbows galore, waves and smiles, Dal Riata truly delivered and lifelong memories and friendships were built.

Striving to develop the best foiling products also means going out to meet real enthusiasts, exchanging ideas, sailing together, testing the equipment in all possible conditions. Observing, listening, experiencing. Taking inspiration from all possible angles in order to be attentive and in constant evolution.

And what did we conclude from the trip? Whilst the craft we travel on have developed, the coastlines and waters of Dal Riata remain timeless.

ISLAND OF PLENTY



Neither Bowien van der Linden or Annabel van Westerop are used to packing light, requiring a substantial quiver to allow for the variable conditions on their respective competitive tours. But, with the optimal travel pairing of an inflatable foilboard and the power of a wing, a multitude of Greek islands and inlets became accessible with a minimal amount of kit...

WORDS **BOWIEN VAN DER LINDEN**
PHOTOS **MILES TAYLOR**

I was stoked to get the call from North, asking if I wanted to go on a girls' wing trip. What better way to discover Greece (and eat as much tzatziki and gyros as possible)? A week later, Annabel van Westerop and I were on a plane, taking the new Seek Air inflatable foilboard on its first mission.

Annabel and I originally met each other on the beach in Noordwijk several years ago, through the surfing association (KSN) that we are both members of. We didn't really know each other very well to begin with, as she was only into kiteboarding and I was only into windsurfing. But winging changed it all! Although only I have been competing on the wing tour, Annabel sure has plenty of experience traveling for competitions, being an experienced athlete on the freestyle kitesurf world tour for many years. Both of us are used to having to focus on freestyle, competing and training, so this trip felt like a holiday, with the emphasis on exploring and cruising. Not having the usual huge board bag, this trip, all we needed was one compact Seek Air bag – inside was our Seek Air, wings, foil and pump – now it felt like a real holiday.

As we arrived, flying over the Greek Islands, we could see the blue waters and endless bays below. Greece still has so many foil spots that are undiscovered. They might not be attractive if you're windsurfing or kitesurfing, but with the ease of launching from a boat into the water, winging gives us so many new possibilities. Our destination, the Greek island of Lefkada, sitting in the Ionian Sea, is a water sports gem. Nobody needs a weather forecast here, with the island having thermal winds that work like clockwork. The mornings, with its calm seas and light breeze, are perfect for beginners. Then the north-westerly winds blow at about 15-25 knots every afternoon from about 2.30pm. This combination allows you to discover the islands by either wing foil, tow foil or SUP foil. We set off on our boat to go and find some cool spots to go riding.

Neither of us had winged on an inflatable board before – I was always scared it would have too much flex and not feel like a stable ride. But the rigid baseplate makes it comfortable and familiar. It gives the board enough rigidity to easily lift it out of the water as you start, and offers easy turning. I mostly used the 4'10 Seek Air at 78 liters, as this comes closest to the typical sizing I'd use in a regular board. With the Dropbox we already know from the rigid Seek boards, you have the same easy rigging – just leave the screws in the mast (which is especially handy on a boat, as you will never lose your screws!)

Vasiliki & Frikes

Our first session was something special. We got onto a yacht before sunrise, and as we were sailing out of Vasiliki harbour, we quickly rigged our foils and pumped up the boards. We were all set to jump into the deep, dark blue waters. As the first rays of light appeared over the Greek islands and the seas started turning turquoise blue, we were tow-foiling behind the yacht. Getting that speed just right for the perfect stern wave, there was no more need for a rope, and we were foil surfing behind the boat on what seemed like an endless wave.

During the tow session, we anchored on the northern side of Ithica, by Frikes and Marmagnas bay. It's a picturesque little harbor, with Greek restaurants sitting by the water's edge, and multiple little islands and beautiful bays to be discovered. The clock hit 2.30pm, the wind turned on, and before we knew it, we were flying between the anchored yachts and around the little islands. As we were zigzagging between the boats, people were waving and smiling at us; seemingly, this wasn't a usual sight in the Greek bays...

Island of Sicilianos (Agios Kilolaos) & Vasiliki

Setting off for a new location on the more northern side of Lefkada, we could feel the wind picking up on the ride there, and the excitement began to rise. On the island of Sicilianos, there is a bay you can sail into, where a tiny Greek Orthodox church sits on a little island surrounded by crystal clear water. This spot is not crowded at all, and from right by the church we set off for a wing session, zigzagging through the bay. This spot has both super flat and choppy water to choose from. Further out of the bay there is some good wind chop due to the onshore winds, perfect if you're in for a downwinder.

Just before sunset, we sailed back into the bay of Vasiliki. The calm turquoise waters from this morning were replaced with white horses and pumping winds. This side-shore wind, which the windsurfers call 'Eric', is a common afternoon occurrence in Vasiliki. I can see why the spot is so popular. On the wing, this spot is perfect for some powered-up freestyle. We decided to make use of the last little rays of sunshine and hopped into the water. Using the powerful wind, we were crossing the bay and cruising along on the wind chop. I had some mild regret at not having taken out the Seek Air with the foot straps in place for some high jumps...

The Ionian Sea turned out to be the perfect place for a wing foil trip. The warm wind and crystal waters give it that perfect "holiday" feel, and the combination of lighter morning and stronger afternoon winds makes it a spot suitable for both beginners and experienced wing foilers. We were able to discover many locations in just a few days as we traveled by boat, although it's also easy to get to some of the better-known spots by road. But by using a boat, the wing then allows you to explore lesser-known and less accessible spots that might pass you by if you're traveling by road, kite or windsurfer... ⋘

SEEKAIR
NORTH

NORTH

THREE SESSIONS THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

...AND THE FAULTY ASSUMPTIONS THAT CAME WITH THEM.

Turning your hand to something new, should, theoretically, be easier if it engages areas of long-held, ingrained knowledge. However, it's not always the case. When professional sailor Philip Muller first turned his hand to downwind foiling, much of the methodology he assumed to be correct from his years spent on the water sailing and surfing didn't apply to this new sport. Here are the lessons he discovered along the way...

WORDS **PHILIP MULLER**
PHOTOS **QUINN & DANE WILSON**

Downwind foiling – aka downwinding – is the modern way to do a very ancient thing, “using simple rafts propelled by the wind to voyage from island to island.” There is a certain freedom that I’ve discovered on windy days, when the swell and sea line up, where my body becomes the sail and with the foil I can go for miles and miles.

Most humans spend the majority of their time in the water within a few hundred meters from shore. I have. And as a regular waterperson, getting out a bit further has changed the way I look at the ocean. To be propped on the shoulder of a rolling swell line from energy that’s traveled thousands of miles, while standing on a banana-peel-sized piece of curved carbon just blows my mind.

Last March, I stumbled into my first downwind session with an especially all-star cast of foil experts: Jack Ho, Cole Kawana, Gage Schoenherr, Matt Cost, Dane and Quinn Wilson. Honestly, I was trying to convince Dane to go surf Seal Beach after a long day of coaching sailing. Dane was dead set on loading his boat up and motoring toward Catalina Island. We took the boat from Ballast Point to the southern tip of the Long Beach breakwall. All the boys jumped in, towed up behind the boat and started cruising back towards shore. After they scattered, I jumped in and grabbed the tow line. After a few faceplants and some coaching from the Wilson brothers, my brain and body slowly started to connect. The rest of the squad pumped, slashed, and floated their way 2.5 miles downwind to just outside the Naval Weapons Station in Seal Beach before the boat scooped up each rider one by one. Once in the boat, each dude brought and shared his stoke as the boat battered the chop and swell back upwind.

Learning to downwind is hard because you have to unlearn a lot of the things that you’ve been taught. I tried to use a strategic left-brained approach and failed. I was a horse with blinders on running full speed to nowhere. I had disregarded my intuition and ability to connect with the ocean. I was trying to use logic to puzzle out the wonderful chaos of the natural world.

✕ **FAULTY ASSUMPTION #1: GET AS MUCH SPEED AS POSSIBLE AND RACE DOWN THE LINE.**

This approach to wave riding has been ingrained in me after 30 years of surfing small waves in Florida. This “go fast, forward” approach presented two problems: one, speed management and two, wave positioning.

Why it doesn’t work: The goal is not to constantly build speed. The goal is to find comfort in a manageable slower speed. You’ll be surprised at how long you can actually glide and maintain flight for when the foil is positioned in the correct spot, which is on the top of the wave, just behind the crest. Another issue I had to overcome was constantly racing down the line towards a flat spot. “The point is to go down wind,” Dane reminded me, after I outran a perfectly good lump.

I learned to only drop in if you can connect to another peak. Find peak after peak. I learned to stay high on the foil and carve around the top of the swell’s crest, almost as if falling off the backside of it. Looking around is key. To retrace yourself is to link back to the original piece of high water and ride it back downhill. There are so many factors that change the shape of a wave in the open water: depth, current, wind, inertia. To keep your eyes open as the ocean changes beneath your feet, then respond to it makes downwinding a transitive experience. It is a return to the hunter-gatherer instinct that is somewhere embedded in our DNA.

✓ **RULE #1:** To downwind, you need to forget everything you know about wave riding.

It took me countless attempts. And every time I crashed into the cold pacific water and I ate another slice of humble pie, I was starting to build a mental map of how to do this new thing. My mind was in a panic and rushed to make sense of something my body couldn’t catch up with. I recommend taking breaks and puzzling it out. In his book ‘The Wisdom of Insecurity’, Alan Watts claims “the root of all our problems is our desire to hold onto things. Life is constantly flowing, and we must let it.”

Such is downwinding.

In May I flew to Oahu. The summer trades were wicking the rolling lumps of Pacific swell into a lather, which crested and collapsed like a parade of maniacal elephants that crashed against the cliffs of the southern coast. It was the heaviest sea state I've ever experienced and yet an average Hawaiian day. Gavin Ball whipped me in off a tow line from his ten-foot inflatable dinghy. I looked beyond the crestline to the backdrop of the island resting in idyllic sunlight. I pushed weight into my heels, carving and retracing my path to face two thousand miles of blue water stretching out toward Polynesia. The expanse of the open ocean and the energy of the swell shook every cell in my body. The adrenaline made my legs shiver.

Gavin and I switched and it was my turn to tow him up. He must have sensed I was a little leary to take the tiller of his 25hp Suzuki, which was smoking at the back, "I've taken this beast all the way to Molokai," he reassured me. It was harder to drive the dinghy than the foil, but at least I got to watch Gavin link a few turns down the face of another marching elephant, as he disappeared leaving me to admire the brow of Diamond Head in the distance.

✕ **FAULTY ASSUMPTION #2: DOWNWINDING IS LIKE SURFING.**

Downwinding is sailing at its core. Once you become competent at managing the flow of the foil beneath the water it works very efficiently. The foil will pop, drive and float. Then the main source of drag becomes your own body as it sails through space. A good downwinder is a lazy downwinder. Using the ocean's power efficiently to connect one wave to another, but also take advantage of the wind's power to get through the flatter sections. Gavin taught me this lesson as he masterfully carved towards and away from his island while he sought to gain or burn speed.

✓ **RULE #2**: When you need speed let the wind push you, if you have speed connect to new ridgelines by riding crosswind.

In November, the season's first Nor'easter pushed down the Florida peninsula. Quinn [Wilson], Nic Muller, Carlos Robles and I were frothing as we passed beneath the Bear Cut bridge in my 18ft boat. Once we got just offshore of Virginia Key, Carlos and Nic pumped up their wings and jumped in, foiling over the sandbar and into the swell off of Key Biscayne. Quinn and I drove further offshore. The swell was four feet at seven seconds, the wind 14 knots. We had about 30 minutes until dusk as the tropical sun sank beneath the horizon. I watched Quinn link 15 turns on one lump, as if he was charging through waist deep powder. "I felt like I could go forever!" Quinn said, grinning, as we traded helm and foil. It's a ten-mile run from the Virginia Key to the southern tip of Key Biscayne. We reached the Bill Baggs lighthouse as the sun melted into the horizon above Key Largo.

✕ **FAULTY ASSUMPTION #3: WHAT WORKED LAST SESSION WILL WORK THIS SESSION.**

I was testing a smaller tail wing on this run, hoping to find more carve and top end. The foil's sensitivity felt pitchy at first, and it took me several attempts to sort out my foot placement. I found a narrow stance and started paying attention to the glide I could get while favoring my backside. The wind's direction was side-onshore, endless lefts. I could gauge a few snaps on my forehand crosswind before linking long carves on my backhand as I rebuilt speed dead downwind.

✓ **RULE #3**: Continue to discover what will work for "this run".

My boy Alan Watts writes, "…music is a delight because of its rhythm and flow, yet the moment you arrest the flow, prolong a note or chord beyond its time, the rhythm is destroyed. Because life is likewise a flowing process … to work against [it] is to work against life itself."

Perhaps there's something to that. Downwinding is jazz. It is improvisation. The landscape of the ocean, even one mile offshore, is a fickle foreign swirl. Unrestrained by a bordering coastline the windblown surface dances in a cacophony of swell, chop and spray belied by the ocean's depth. Three miles out it becomes a rhythmic undulation. The sheer energy of that cosmic churn is a captivating phenomenon.

To downwind on a foil is to become a human tumbleweed. To position yourself in the tumult of the sea and let the path unfold before you. You only have two options: ride crosswind or downwind. It's a beautiful exercise of acting within the present moment. And as you hunt for the next lump and milk it for everything you can, before turning toward the next, you string together the ride of your life. I think you owe it to yourself to try it.

TIAKI

flow
STATE

After Victor Hays' trip to Tahiti was curtailed in 2021, he intended to make his return visit something pretty special. With the combined in-water skills of photographer Andre Magarao, and the intuition, instinct and watercraft accessibility provided by a few key locals, it was a mission accomplished...

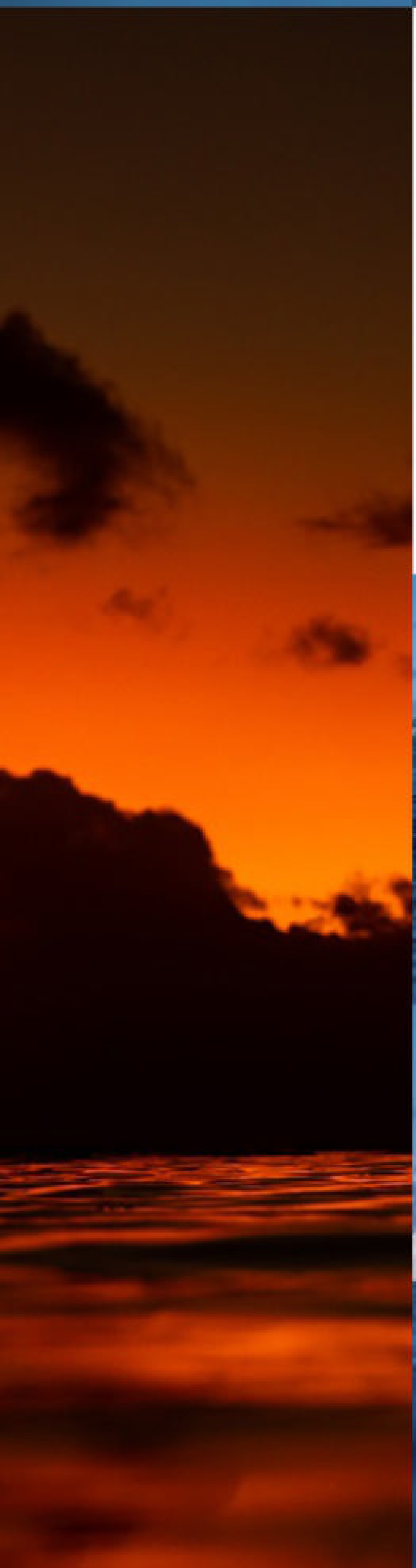
AIR

Victor Hays: Tahiti is basically on the bucket list for most of the athletes I know through different water sports. Riding in perfect blue water with an insane backdrop is always going to be exciting. After my 2021 trip there, when Covid cut things short and prevented us from making the dream trip, I really wanted to come back in 2022 with an even more ambitious plan, and more focus on foiling.

With everything booked, accommodation sorted in Puna'auia, and having been in touch with our local friends out there (without whom it's basically impossible to maximize your water time), the mission began.

At the beginning of the trip, the wind was great, but the waves were not that good, so we mainly focused on stacking flat water wing clips and shots with photographer Andre Magarao. It was amazing to ride in such clear waters, with perfect steady winds, but our minds were on the waves to come.

Andre Magarao: Going to Tahiti as a photographer is probably the ultimate dream. The perfect clear water and the crazy untouched jungle backdrops are amazing. The first few days were pretty mellow. We did some flat-water winging that was fun, beautiful, and relaxed to shoot. Most places had zero currents and were easy to read and navigate.



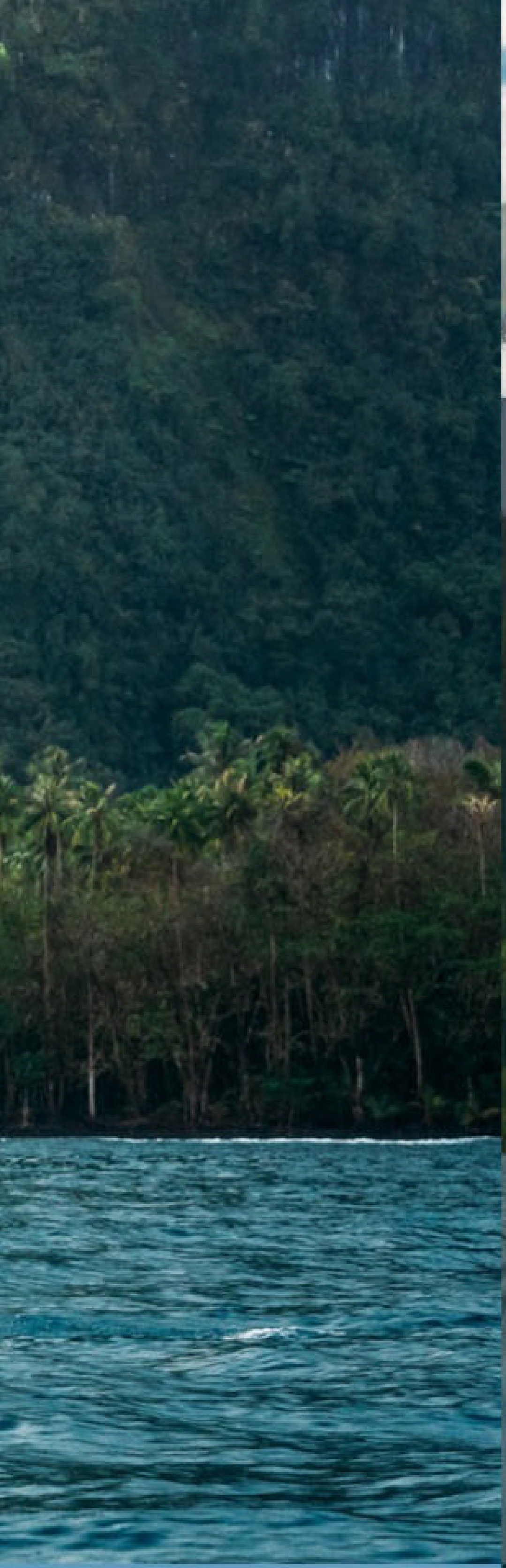
> "I LITERALLY HAD TO SWIM THE WHOLE TIME TO KEEP MYSELF IN A GOOD SPOT OTHERWISE THE CURRENT WOULD PULL ME COMPLETELY PAST THE WAVE TO THE OUTSIDE. I DON'T REMEMBER SWIMMING ANYWHERE EVER THAT HAD A SITUATION QUITE LIKE THIS." ANDRE MAGARAO

Victor: Luckily the forecast changed, and we were finally able to enjoy some tow-foiling in different locations, most notably one close to the famous wave at Teahupo'o, that offered some fast waves that would peel all the way to the reef.

There were four of us on our friend's jet ski, watching the WSL event, then we decided to move to the channel upwind of the event. There the waves were breaking far outside, and gave us some epic runs, with Andre floating around taking shots with by far the most beautiful backdrop I've ever seen.

I should mention that riding foils in Tahiti is challenging. Throughout every session you need to be super focused on what you're doing, as every wave is so powerful that your placement, the way you ride, and your mindset regarding crashes has to be prepared.

Andre: Shooting at that spot past Teahupo'o was insane. All you can see is untouched jungle and no other humans in the vicinity, other than us. The spot was actually pretty chill to swim in. The current wasn't that bad, and the guys were able to keep on finding nice rolling waves. The weather kept on changing every minute basically, so by the end of what felt like a quick session, in the photos it looks we spent the whole day in the water.



Victor: Tahiti kept delivering some crazy days, but in summer the swell can get very big very quickly, which doesn't help when planning which spot to choose next. We took the decision to move to Mo'orea, to experience the wilder lifestyle and try out some new waves, and hopefully score some wing surfing sessions. Having booked everything again, and after moving a ton of gear, we made it.

On our first day in Mo'orea we got in touch with local rippers Fred Morin and Swan Habelt, who knew exactly where to go and when. Fred took us to a little motu for a tow/wave session with some overhead sets. What a dreamy location that was. We spent the whole day towing amongst those beautiful waves until our ski ran out of gas. Epic!

Andre: The first spot we shot in Mo'orea felt more like shooting surfing to me. We actually had to wait for the better sets. There were some crazy currents and I had to swim pretty hard to avoid getting caught by a few rogue sets. The spot was insane of course. Super beautiful water and backdrops. One thing that makes it pretty tricky to shoot from the water there is that you are pretty far from the land so it's hard to have reference points other than the wave itself.

Victor: Day two on Mo'orea, and although wind was forecast on Windguru, just like every island out there, there are so many parameters that can affect the conditions. We were praying to finally align some good wind, sun, and waves.

We drove to Ha'apiti, a famous left hander wave, and the wind was blowing at 15-18 knots with some decent shoulder to overhead sets. Lucky enough once again, our friend Fred was able drop off Andre in the channel to be able to shoot the action from the water. The current wasn't easy for Andre, but his talent and experience of being in critical places like this helped him to get the job done. I was out there on my 5m FreeWing AIR v3 for over three hours, in this absolute dream location, wave after wave. We were completely cooked.

Andre: That day in Ha'apiti was one of the most unique experiences I've ever had shooting in the water. The current was nonstop. It felt like I was doing a marathon and not the usual sprints that you have to do to avoid a wave or two on the head. Tahiti has a really small tide coefficient, so I wasn't expecting that at all. I literally had to swim the whole time to keep myself in a good spot otherwise the current would pull me completely past the wave to the outside. I don't remember swimming anywhere ever that had a situation quite like this. But of course the place was incredible, and every time I had to go under a wave the water was just so blue and beautiful. It was hard to get out of the water when the time came.

Victor: This Tahiti trip just could not have been better. From dream location to dream location. The foil scene in Tahiti is at the highest level of the sport. From surf foiling, tow foiling in big waves, wing foiling... every discipline of the sport has been pushed to the highest level by the local riders.

Tahiti can provide you the most unbelievable foil ride ever, but you've got to be aware that it's not an easy place to shoot. The fact is you need a lot of help from the locals, and they are the key on making any project happen out there. I am super grateful for them.

THE SLEEPING

GIANT

It was a moment that Tom Constant and Matt Etxebarne had been anticipating for a long time… When the conditions in the mid-Atlantic sought to send a swell so big and so perfectly aimed, that it would wake the sleeping giant that is Belharra in the Northern Basque region of France. They'd been watching and waiting, and the day finally came…

PHOTOS **JÉRÔME HOUYVET**

TOM CONSTANT

My friend and teammate Matt and I were enjoying some tow-foiling in Nazaré on the first swell of the winter when we saw the conditions line up for the Belharra wave to awaken. We had been waiting for this moment for two years. It was the perfect opportunity to try out our new big wave tow-in equipment.

Belharra is a wave located 2.5km from the coast, and the way it's set up means that it arrives at the spot where it forms with a lot of speed, so when we get towed into the wave, our velocity will be very high and it is essential to remain highly concentrated so as not to make a mistake.

From the very first set, we rode the waves as far inside as possible, with as much commitment as possible. That was our goal. We had some incredible rides at speeds close to 60km/h, but we also had a few big wipeouts that were not serious, but the violence of the impact and the time spent underwater are not to be underestimated – we triggered our cartridge vests several times.

When you fall, you are quickly taken deep underwater, so you have to release the vest quickly enough so that it inflates fully before being overwhelmed by the pressure.

The frequency of the waves that day gave a real advantage to foils over the other riders present, and highlights a promising future for tow-foiling.

MATT ETXEBARNE

For several days while we were up at Nazaré, we observed this huge swell that was going to hit the Basque Coast. Along with my friend Tom, we decided to go to Belharra with the objective of catching one of the biggest waves possible, drawing lines on a foil that were as close as possible to surfing.

The line up in Belharra is huge, it is similar in size to several soccer fields put together. We towed back and forwards for long periods, waiting for the bomb.

Then the moment came where we saw this huge set of waves coming toward us from the open sea... and that's when I caught the biggest wave of my life. When I let go of the rope at the top of the wave, I was concentrating on not falling, but it was difficult because I was going so fast on the wave.

Following the drop and when I got to the bottom of the wave there was a zone that was full of turbulence, and so it was inevitable... I fell very violently and the foam covered me. After what felt like forever underwater in this violent maelstrom, I popped up, and Tom came to get me with the ski. After this wave we towed back out and I was able to catch two or three very big waves too. We were so happy to live this moment and to see that all those months of testing, development and training had finally started to pay off. The road is still long but we are ready for the next swell.

JÉRÔME HOUYVET

(PHOTOGRAPHER)

As a photographer, it's always an exciting challenge to shoot new waves... I've had the chance to shoot Jaws many times during the last 25 years, as I spent half of my time in Maui. Despite the fact that I'm French, I never had the chance to shoot Belharra, which is a shame. So when Tom Constant and Matt Etxebarne invited me to join them two days before, I must say that I was pretty honored and excited! But until the morning I saw it breaking, while the sun rose over the Pyrenean mountains in the background, I knew that thousands of things could happen to destroy the dream before it even started.

For a first shooting attempt, I thought that a boat would be the best option, even if I'm pretty experienced at shooting from a ski. We left the harbor soon after dark and were immediately surrounded by the huge swell. Our captain knows the place, but as it's two miles out from the shore with no landmarks around, you've got to be pretty careful and ready to escape the impact zone at any time, as it kind of moves around constantly!

Luckily the conditions were pretty smooth, with light offshore winds and a beautiful sun shining... I couldn't have asked for more for a first shoot with these solid waves. Tom started with his first wave and, well, check the photos! He now has enough experience on a foil to draw lines close to the peak like any other surfer, which gave me far more interesting photos than we used to get with big wave foiling.

Training, equipment, research and development pays off... you can definitely see it when watching Matt and Tom riding theses giants. These guys are writing big wave foiling history for sure. Can't wait their next invitation... for Nazaré hopefully! ⋘

BRAND BACKSTORY

FLITEBOARD

Already an established entrepreneur, it was a lightbulb moment at a kite racing event that set Fliteboard founder David Trewern off on his next mission – to build a motorized foil board for himself. Cut to today, and the brand sells thousands of Fliteboards a year, and (since this interview took place) have unveiled even more new tech. Late last year, Contributing Editor Steve Sjuggerud caught up with David at the Fort Lauderdale Boat Show to find how it all came about in the first place…

Steve: David, thanks for meeting with us. So for me, eFoiling is like the gateway drug to get into foiling. There's really nothing better in giving someone that sensation. What got you hooked into eFoiling in the first place?

David: Yeah, I totally agree regarding eFoiling being the gateway drug to foiling. I spent my life doing all sorts of different watersports – windsurfing since I was 10, and surfing and then got into kitesurfing in 1998 then into kite foiling. That eventually led me to create Fliteboard. I got the first prototype working back in 2017 after a year of stuffing around and not knowing whether it was even possible. I finally got flying and it was just an incredible feeling. Initially I thought the product would be a niche within a niche. There weren't a lot of people even kite foiling at the time. I initially intended to make Fliteboard for myself. But within a week, I started putting kitesurfing friends on it, and they're getting up and foiling, having never foiled before. Then there were people with little or no water sports experience getting up and foiling in half an hour. Suddenly this wasn't a niche within a niche, it was like going from zero to 100 in water sports in 30 minutes. It was such an exciting thing for the people that tried it, but for me it was the culmination of a 30-year journey in watersports to be able to foil. My test pilots were bypassing all of that. It's just incredible, and we've now sold so many boards to people who had no previous watersports experience, that are now hooked on foiling.

Steve: I've taught a few people like that, who didn't have water sports experience and they saw the light. They don't think of it as something they could ever do in their lifetime and now they realize they can...

David: I don't know whether you have this Aussie term “frother” in the US, but I'm the ultimate frother. I wish I could explain it to those who have never experienced foiling, kitesurfing or surfing, because it's like, “you guys are all missing out!” And that's what's so cool about eFoiling now, everyone can experience it. In a really short space of time, they're up flying above the water and having that Zen flow state moment.

Steve: So which Fliteboard are you riding these days?

David: I ride my little 4'2 ULTRA. Coming this January we'll have the ULTRA L, which will be the lightest performance eFoil we've built by a big margin (Editor's note: read more on this in our Inbound section later on in the mag!). We've taken our ULTRA and now built the whole battery box out of carbon, stripped away everything that's not necessary and taken a kilogram off the board. It comes in gold, which is going to be a little bit confronting for some people, but it's very cool out there on the water. The game changer here is we've developed a new battery that we've called the Flitecell Nano which weighs only 14 pounds. The whole setup is 20% lighter. When I put a Flow 1100 wing on it (the wing I like to ride using our True Glide Prop), I can still ride for 45 minutes, and if I'm catching a lot of waves even longer. I can catch about a wave a minute in front of my house in Byron Bay, and can ride for over an hour that way. The ULTRA L is so agile and responsive because it's so light.

Steve: That is one of the real joys of foiling, right? When you're surfing, 90% of the time you're sitting on your board or paddling out. But when you're eFoiling, you can catch every other wave in a set. It's a major workout...

David: And that's why this new battery is so amazing, because I don't need a battery to be any bigger than that. My legs are done after an hour. I've been obsessed from day one with trying to make the lightest eFoil possible, so that's a big step this year with our Nano Battery. Everyone who's ridden it loves it. The other big thing we've got coming is the Flite Jet.

Steve: Oh wow...

David: Yeah. So the original idea for the Fliteboard was a jet. I was at a kite race event and there was no wind. Everyone was just sitting around waiting for wind. Every time we saw a tiny gust, people were running to the water to launch their kites, and then sink and swim five minutes later. I'm super frustrated that I can't get going on my kite. And that's when I had the Fliteboard idea: “let's put a motor on it!” So, I got in the car, went looking for trolling motors and Googling. Nothing like it existed. That was the first moment where I thought “Wow, I can't believe no one's thought of this, and I can't believe how cool it would be.” It was easier said than done, and another year until I got the first prototype working, but that's where the original idea came from.

Steve: So do you have engineering experience?

David: Well I'm not an engineer, but come from a family of architects, originally wanted to be an industrial designer, and I've certainly learned to be an engineer in the past six or seven years! I am a creator at heart. Always innovating, making stuff. And then came the water sports, and then the passion for all the digital technology and apps and having the very first smartphones and hacking all of that stuff, and it all just comes together perfectly in Fliteboard. It's like the Steve Jobs thing of joining the dots backwards. All that tinkering with kites and sailing since I was a kid and understanding the way foils work.

Steve: So at this point, there was no plan for a business, this was just your passion, just to see if you could do it?

David: Yeah, well to give you even more backstory, I got burnout from 20 years building my first two businesses. And that's why we moved to Byron Bay, to have some time on the beach with the family – have a year off. So I started tinkering with this stuff, and my wife said, “You've got to promise me you're not going to start a business.” And I said, “Don't worry, it's just for me!” And that was the start of Fliteboard.

Steve: So famous last words!

David: Right! So I had time to tinker, three months into my year off, and I was ordering motors and bike batteries. I bought a 3D printer from Aldi, and then I worked out how to use that and taught myself CAD. I taught myself how to use Accushaper and I designed the Fliteboard board. I had designed and built boards before, I had all the bits and pieces, and I was bolting it all together. Then I needed a prop, so I downloaded a prop CAD file from the internet and shrunk it down and started mucking around with it and playing with it. And then I just went freestyle. Eventually we had naval architects come in and they spent a long time trying to better my prop, using all these CFD tools and prop design software that's been around for a long time and evolved and evolved, but their props never worked better than mine in this application. They never had the efficiency I achieved through trial and error and logic from years spent tweaking sails windsurfing. It's that intuitiveness, and it's the same with the board design. There was a bit of styling done by some industrial designers we work with on the tail, but the rocker, the chine angles... I did all of that myself.

Steve: And this comes from your windsurfing background, from your kiteboarding background and from kite foiling. You've experienced these things at the highest levels...

David: Yeah, and I'm a perfectionist, I get obsessive about this stuff. I worked everything out intuitively with our first boards, and even our new boards haven't changed too much. We've just tweaked them. We nailed that first shape. And it's been hard to improve upon. This gets a bit esoteric, but I almost feel like I had this intent and I just wanted to make a great product, I wasn't trying to make money, I wasn't trying to build a business... I feel like the universe was helping me make an awesome product because of that intent. And I've learnt that if you start deviating from that intent, things get a lot harder. I was in that flow state and things were just working naturally.

Steve: You had the Byron Bay vibes working for you there...

David: Right!

Steve: But it's one thing in life to make a board that works for one person, but then to make one that works for thousands of people... how do you go from making one for yourself to making the first hundred?

David: I think I just changed my attitude along the way. I've always wanted to make everything perfect, control everything, but I had this switch when I moved to Byron, which was like, "I can't control shit, I'm just a passenger on this rock speeding through space, I'm going to go with the flow and have fun with this." It was so stressful building the Fliteboard and taking it to market, I had no idea how to do it initially, I wasn't an engineer... but my mindset was, well, whatever. I'm just going to get up tomorrow and enjoy what I'm doing, put my heart and soul into it and see where it goes.

Steve: Did you ever imagine when you were setting out that there'd be so many people out there riding Fliteboards now?

David: That is what's really inspired me the whole way through. Our customers get me out of bed in the morning. Australia's only 5% of our market; we export 95% of our product to the rest of the world including 50% to the US. So, every morning for the last five years, I wake up, and I go to Instagram, and I see 20-100 messages and videos from people all over the world on their Fliteboards. How can you not be inspired by that? It's incredible. I see Paris Hilton out on a Fliteboard, or Adam Bennetts out doing incredible stuff, or Keahi and Moona flying around in Hawaii, or customers from all corners of the world. There's even a couple in Norway who got married last week on a Fliteboard, wearing their full wedding outfits. It's gone so much bigger than making this little thing just for me to ride around on in Byron Bay, and it's captivated so many people.

Steve: So where are you at now? How big is the company now and where is it based?

David: Our HQ is still in Byron Bay, but we have offices in Melbourne, Amsterdam, Richmond California and Nyack, New York. We have nearly 100 employees, but the company still maintains a small business feel, possibly thanks to the 'Byron approach' to life.

Steve: Well, man, this is all so exciting. Any final thoughts to share with Foiling Magazine readers?

David: I think last year we sold 3,500 boards; this year will be more. We've been supply constrained, but we're getting that production going again. I was amazed riding around here in Fort Lauderdale, and people are yelling out, "What is that thing?" And I'm like, "Really? You still don't know what this is?" So there's a long way to go and we're super excited. And ultimately, again, it's still the beginning... and yes, this is the gateway drug to foiling.

Steve: Right, and there's a lot of people out there yet to try it out...

David: I think I read some data somewhere that 60 million people in the world surf. Now some of those people might surf once a year or so, but let's say there's 6 million people that surf regularly... it's a lot of people. And my experience tells me that once you get into foiling and you realize that you've got so much more efficiency, you never go back. So I think we're just going to continue to see huge growth in all kinds of foiling, with lots of different combinations and permutations. You know, stand up, sit down, one person, two person, pedal, electric... you name it. And I think you guys have nailed it too with your magazine! I remember your first issue was a little thin issue. And now it's huge. I think there is a great future ahead, and we just want to see everyone have foil face with that big smile.

SUP FOILING IN THE WAVES

You've made progress, you're up there on the SUP, king of the world, got your paddle strokes down… and then along comes a wave. Don't panic. Arthur Arutkin has got your back…

WORDS **ARTHUR ARUTKIN**
PHOTOS **FISHBOWLDIARIES**

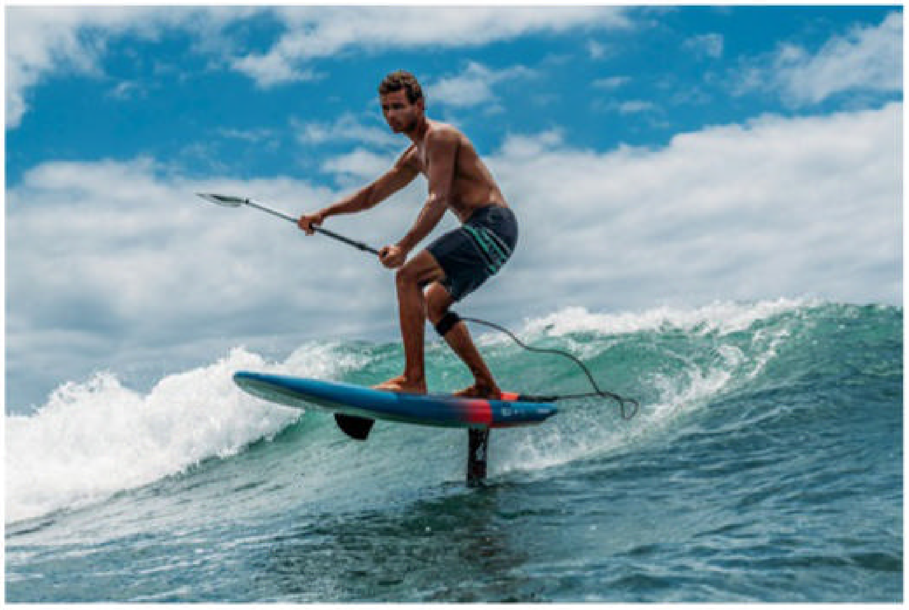
THE GEAR

1. Choose your gear wisely, make sure you are using a board on which you are stable enough and one that has enough volume. I usually use the Sky SUP 6'1, 108 liter from Fanatic. I also recommend using a short mast so you can go in shallower waters and take off faster – I personally use the 75cm Fanatic mast with the 1400 Aero Carve, as I tend to use bigger sizes on a SUP foil than I do on a surf foil due to the weight of the board. If the waves get bigger, I can use the 1100, then if I'm looking at really small waves and I'm likely to pump more than do turns in the waves, I'll use the High Aspect.

FIRST STEP

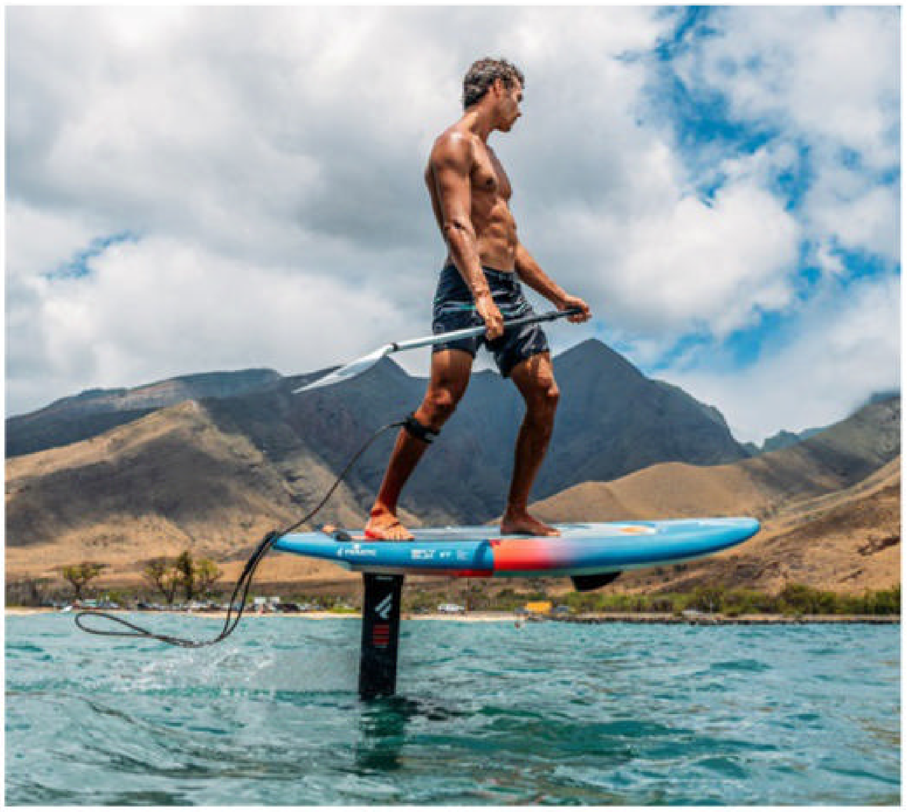
2. The first step and the key to a good ride is to choose your wave wisely. To learn stand up paddle foiling, I recommend a mushy, not-too-powerful kind of wave and ideally one that breaks then reforms. Obviously a beach break is not what you are looking for on a foil... you want to be able to take your time on the wave, to feel comfortable and find the sweet spot for your feet on the board and you don't want to hit the bottom with your foil.

3. I usually tell people to try and take off in low-level white water to begin with, so you already have some power and push from the wave to help you get some lift out of the water. To do so, I usually adopt a very wide stance and I try to bend my legs as much as possible to have as much control on the board/foil as I can. I'll also be as centered as possible on the board too, as below.



THE RIDE

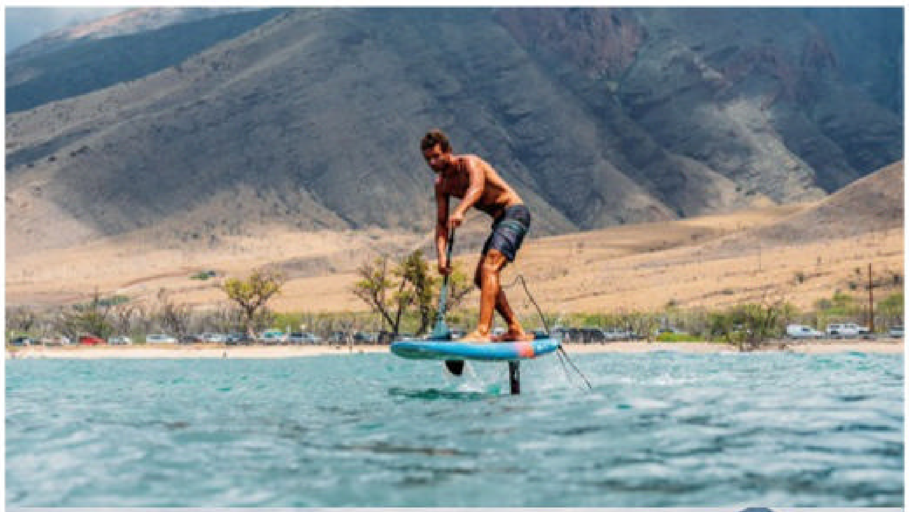
4. Once I know how to take a wave, the next step is to ride it. Once the take off is done, I can then relax and stand a little straighter. I can put more pressure towards the back of the board on my back foot, to help the foil up in the air when riding a flatter section of the wave or the shoulder.

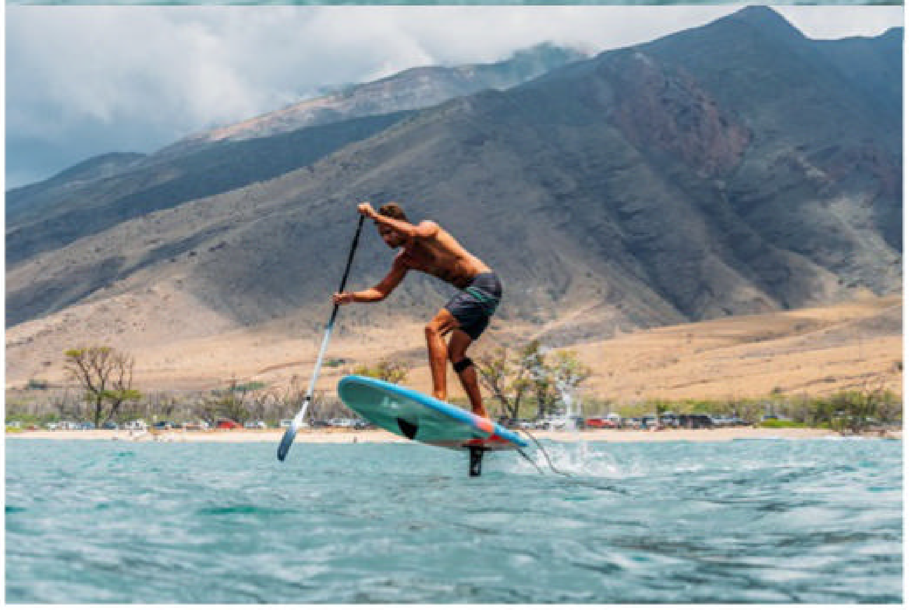


5. I can then redirect myself toward the powerful section of the wave. If it's mellow and not too powerful, you can lean towards the direction you want to go, always looking in that direction towards the shoulder. If the wave is powerful, you have a lot of speed, or you are not feeling in control, bend the knees and stay on top of the board to maintain control, and let the shoulder of the wave and your look direct you.

PUMPING BACK TO THE PEAK

6. Once you kick out of the wave, try to keep as much speed as possible. You will want to bend your knees and push on your back foot a lot to get the foil as high as possible, extend your body as much as possible and stand very tall, shift your weight forward to accelerate and bring the foil down while reaching forward with your paddle to avoid hitting the foil, and then get that extra boost by giving it a good strong paddle. Then onto the back foot to reproduce the movement as a loop.





FLYSURFER
MOJO

WEAPON OF CHOICE

RIDER	**NATHAN VAN VUUREN**
WEAPON	**FLYSURFER MOJO**
RIDER HEIGHT	**6’0**
RIDER WEIGHT	**70KG**

The Flysurfer MOJO currently includes a range of six sizes, from 2.8 to 7m. My personal favorite size is the 3.5m as it has a great low end pull for its size, and still handles incredibly well in stronger wind conditions. It uses a variety of materials, including triple ripstop material for a nice tight and even tension on the canopy. You will find high quality Dacron on the leading edge to keep maximum stiffness and rigidity throughout the wing.

The MOJO comes equipped with three soft and comfortable handles, as opposed to using a solid boom. The handles have a slight flex which assists in soaking up those stronger gusts, which in turn places less force on the arms and allows for more time having fun in the water!

From the very first time that I used it, I knew that the MOJO was unlike any other wing I had tried before. I began using it pretty much every single time there was even a hint of a breeze or pumping winds, riding either on the wingfoil boards, or even on a regular surfboard in the waves. Fast forward to the present day, I am super privileged to be a part of the Flysurfer team and I am still blown away by the versatility of the wing.

Whenever I try a wing for the first time my first thoughts are based on initial feel, which is generally focused on the provided handles. Honestly, it's a bit of a make-or-break situation for me personally, as it is the part of the wing that you are most connected to while you are riding.

Then I turn my attention towards the overall stability of the wing. I look for a balanced feel between the front and back hand while riding up and downwind. Next I'll see if there is any fluttering occurring near the trailing edge, and if the wing is maintaining a nice and tight profile. These are key details to look for when testing as it greatly affects the overall performance and feel of a wing.

There are many more important key factors to look for on a wing, but the most important thing is how it feels out in the water! I will usually attempt to spend as much time as possible on the water flying the wing to see how it handles and reacts in a variety of wind conditions. This is always the most exciting stage of testing as each session has a different outcome.

Over the time that I have spent using and riding the Flysurfer MOJO, I have really come to appreciate how versatile and progressive the wing is. It has been amazing to use the wing over the last few years and see how the Flysurfer R&D team are always thinking ahead about how to make an already amazing product even better!

When wingfoil racing, I will be looking to use a wing that has a high amount of torque and power for quick acceleration and speed but can also be controlled easily. The same applies for freestyle competitions, as you need a wing that has good power to jump, but also needs that light feel in the hands for maneuvers.

I have enjoyed being a part of the R&D with the Flysurfer team. It has been so rad to see how much time, development, and testing goes into every single product. But one of the main reasons I enjoy testing is being able to personally try the product, make tweaks and changes until we ultimately end up with an amazing result that others will be able to use and enjoy!

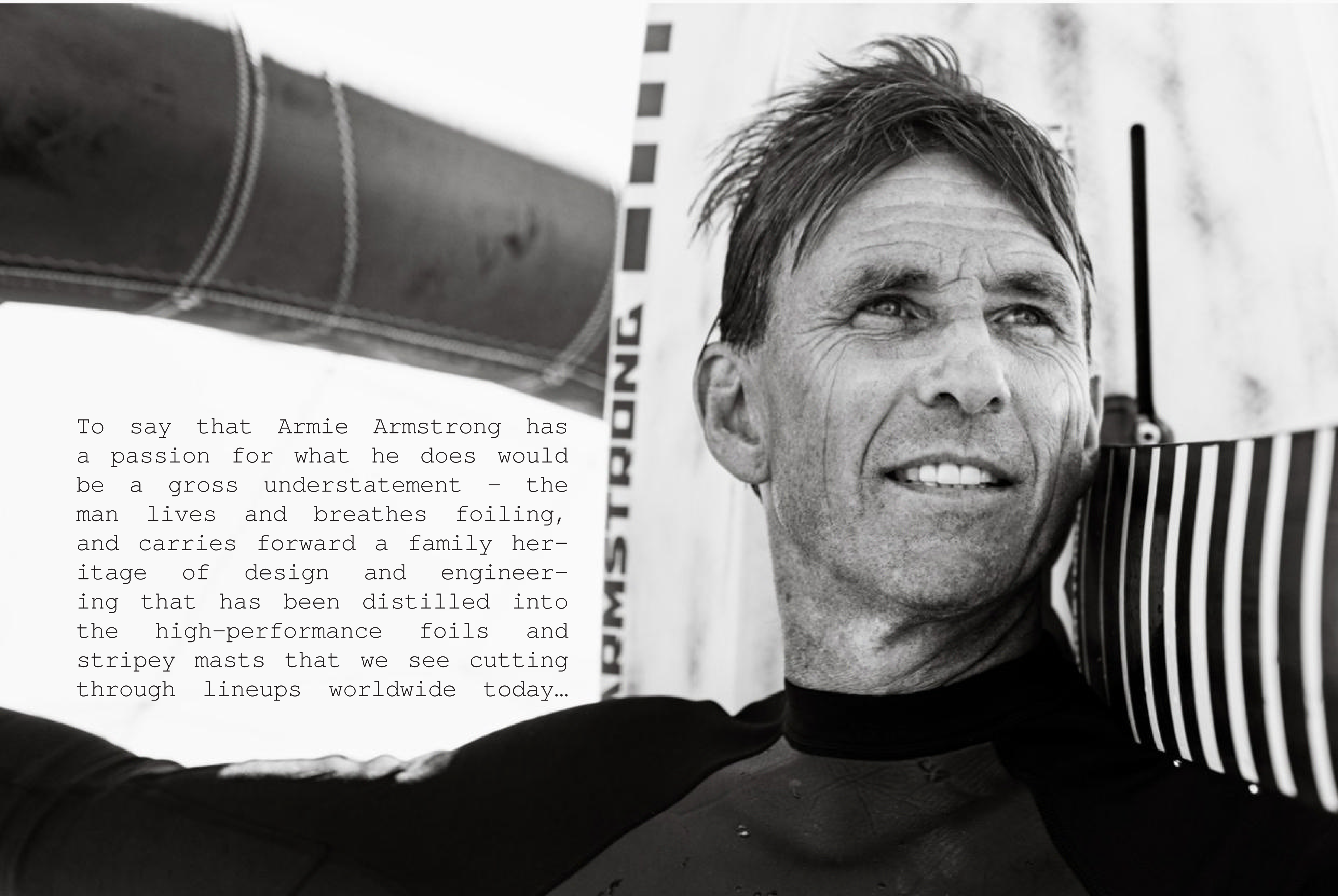
I have used the MOJO in many awesome destinations around the world such as Hood River and Maui over this past season, but I will always enjoy the moments spent at my local spots flying with my family and friends out in the waters of Cape Town where we have some of the best wingfoil wave conditions.

MOJO
MOJO
4.5
MOJO

ARMSTRONG

WING
COMMANDER

ARMIE ARMSTRONG



To say that Armie Armstrong has a passion for what he does would be a gross understatement – the man lives and breathes foiling, and carries forward a family heritage of design and engineering that has been distilled into the high-performance foils and stripey masts that we see cutting through lineups worldwide today…

Hey Armie. So right from the beginning, what sparked your interest in foiling? What was your first encounter with it, and how did it develop into you building foils yourself?

I was incredibly lucky to grow up in a keen adventure sailing family in Aotearoa, New Zealand. We always followed the endeavors of kiwi sailors internationally and the epic 2013 America's Cup was the first time I really became interested in foils. The Kiwis were the first to foil their AC72 here in 2012. I vividly remember seeing Team New Zealand flying gracefully past us up the Waitemata Harbor at mind bending speed – so close to the wind! There was some dark magic at work here! This world class sailing history and associated industry combined with local AC development is probably a key reason why there is such a concentration of top foil brands coming out of New Zealand.

Kite foiling really started to take off at about the same time. As soon as I got my first kite foil rig, I was completely hooked. The way a foil made kiting a proper sailing sport, ridiculous upwind angles and the easy speed through chop meant long jaunts around islands in the Hauraki Gulf were easy and fun. I am a bit of a gear thrasher, and unfortunately broke my kite foil rig jumping it pretty early on, so was always fixing it, which evolved into improving it. I learnt to use composites from my grandfather (an architect and boat builder) and father, a top NZ architect, who also instilled design concepts from an early age.

I spent a few years competing on race and SUP surf boards I made at home in New Zealand. These custom boards were the first Armstrong boards, the Armstrong family crest as the original logo. Around 2015 I made a big SUP foil setup from the bits and pieces of leftover broken kite foils and was having a ball in small surf. Near the end of 2015 I had an idea to try to make a complete foil system that was much more robust, based on some yacht engineering. I got together with a good friend Rob Whittall (long time legend in kite, wing and paraglider design) and we started. We didn't realise it would be such a long and involved (albeit exciting) process to make a strong unique foil system with the best materials available on the planet.

Tell us about your process when coming to designing a new foil. Does it start from customer demand? Or do you spot gaps in the sport that need to be filled?

The main driver is always trying to make a better foil than we previously achieved. One key challenge now is that foiling is so diverse. With so many awesome ways to foil plus such a wide range of abilities, no one foil will do it all. This process is extremely inspiring as there are always new ideas to consider, nuances to learn and gains to be made, whether it is in handling, speed range, efficiency, or myriad other factors. Mostly we are trying to design clear ranges of foils, so that there are good choices for all rider sizes and levels, in all the foil sports that we love.

The process itself starts with trying to define a clear purpose for the foil, then determine the key parameters and attributes for that purpose. Using all that's been learned to date, we try to distill the primary numbers and make a start on the new foil. Then the time-consuming prototyping process begins. We adjust each parameter one by one on sequential prototypes, testing all the time in as many conditions as possible, to make the necessary decisions to move the design forward. There is always a tradeoff between the key parameters, especially handling/maneuverability vs speed range/glide.

We are very lucky now as we have access to some of the world's top fluid dynamics experts to consult on key elements, like foil sections etc. This is a massive gain as we can rely on people way smarter than us to point the spotlight and narrow down the development window. Then it all still comes down to testing and how the foil feels to ride. Test, tweak, test, tweak, test, tweak... I love my job!

Armstrong's recently released Flow 235 and Surf 205 tail wings.

The Armstrong MA800 wing. A high performance wing that's a popular option amongst the majority of the Armstrong team.

Armstrong 935 Performance Mast from the new Performance range, released late last fall.

Armstrong's new DW SUP foil board

Since Armstrong first started out, what would you highlight as the key developments in the foil industry?

There are so many! Where to start… Kite foiling, downwind foiling pioneered by Kai Lenny was a massive driver for our early foiling passion, pumping around in surf (also pioneered by Kai), boards getting stiffer, stronger, smaller and more foil specific. Perhaps most importantly the development of light weight hand wings… That has simply opened up foiling to so many more people. Foils and personal hand wings are a perfect match, made in a tropical blue lagoon paradise!

How did you land on the striped graphic pattern?

As a kid, Jacques Cousteau was a hero of mine, and we would watch his documentaries. I remember seeing them testing striped baited targets. The sharks were deterred by the horizontal striped patterns covering the entire target. Possibly something to do with the shark not being able to identify the object. I thought that was really cool. There is also some more recent study on this behavior, so I decided we would cover the foils with stripes. While finalizing our first production foils, I met a talented Colombian visual artist, Juliana Duran, who I explained the shark stripe theory to. She carefully drew up our unique double tapered stripe pattern on a foil system mockup. It is both an effective deterrent and looks amazing. The rest is history and it seems to have struck a chord…

What's been your proudest moment in terms of foil design?

Probably the most intense development stage was coming up with the stable, easy to ride, low speed foil I hand made in my father's boatshed in 2015, before I had seen anything like it. This early prototype was re-shaped many times. Eventually we scanned it, and ultimately it became our first production foil, the CF1600, that Kai pumped for a few waves and went viral in a WSL video. This was a start from scratch process, ultimately delivering a totally unique foil system to be used across several generations of foils, with thinner and very different geometries, all on the same system. Of course, we could never have grown to meet the exploding foil enthusiasm without meeting our amazing supply chain partners based in the global tech hub of Shenzhen. This incredibly hard-working team have pushed day and night to elevate our product quality, stability and materials.

You've completed a lot of global foil challenges yourself. What's been the highlight of those?

The standout highlight for me was the 2017 Napali race on Kauai. It is such a mind-blowing coastline, with epic conditions in one of my favourite places on the planet. I was racing the top paddlers in SUP at their peak, passing Travis and T2 just off Kalalau Beach, before the wind swung 180, leaving me paddling prone for the last three miles. I 100% knew then, that foiling was just starting to scratch the surface and couldn't be happier being fully committed to ride this wave.

Why do you think it's taken so long for downwind foiling to make it mainstream and how do you predict uptake will be in the long term?

For great downwind on any craft, there are only a few places in the world that provide exceptional conditions. Another factor is probably that gear development is only just making this easy enough for more people to experience DW foiling in non-perfect DW conditions. Now that the new boards and foils make getting going on foil so much easier, I think this will grow pretty quickly to become a great part of the sport. There will be some impressive adventures achieved for sure. The latest DW boards also happen to be a blast for light wind winging without the need for massive light wind wings.

Will Armstrong develop a DW-specific foil?

Effectively this has already been in development with the bigger MA foils coming soon, and an all-new pump foil range to be released later this year for small conditions and max pump and glide.

Tell us a little more about your involvement with sailing, and how you came to know the AC crew...

I was introduced to Jimmy Spithill a few years ago. He was really keen to try our foils for kite, surf and tow so I flew to Sydney to go for a foil session and show him some of our gear. He loved it right away and has been a big supporter of mine ever since. He is such an inspiring, driven and talented individual that I could no longer even hold a grudge against him for hammering us in the 2013 America's Cup

Jo Aleh is a top Kiwi sailing athlete. She had been ripping on our foils for a while, which I think led to some of the Team NZ crew wanting some of our foil gear and reaching out to us. That led on to meeting Blair Tuke and Pete Burling. These guys are the leaders of the sailing team at Team NZ and are clearly at the top of their game. During the buildup to the latest AC in Aotearoa, NZ, we started to have some epic downwind tow foil sessions in the harbor, when it was too windy for them to sail. We then started having some fun dawn foil missions to the surf. I worked hard to feed this new addiction, as it was pretty obvious that getting honest feedback from such high-level expert athletes would be a great thing.

From your current range, what's your absolute favorite foil and why? Which would you take to the proverbial desert island?

MA1000 or MA1225 depending on what sort of wind and waves that island could expect. These two have the most range of any of our foils for the widest set of conditions and foil sports. Either can make a great one-foil travel quiver for wing, surf, tow, SUP. The 1000 for more surf-oriented riding or smaller riders and the 1225 more for light wind wing small wave ripping or slightly bigger boards/riders. These foils just turn so sweetly and land airs with epic pop directly back to foil. They are just a blast to ride! I'd also 100% take our up-coming pump fuselage, as this further increases the range of the foils for maximum use.

Where's the Armstrong base of operations right now, and what foiling disciplines and sort of conditions are your favorite for testing?

Mostly in New Zealand for the last two to three years. I test in all conditions as that is necessary, and we're really lucky to get very different conditions here every day. I do prefer cross-off wave riding with the wing in Taranaki or tow-in foiling mile long breaks at either Muriwai or Raglan Bar when its clean and pumping 3-6 foot west coast ground swell. Then there are downwind missions in the Hauraki Gulf on the new boards... so much to do, so little time!

Finally Armie, where do you see the future of foil sports heading now and in the long term?

It's still so fresh and exciting! There is so much more to learn. I think foils will simply get better and better for each foil sport. Rippers like Oskar Johansson will push more insane sessions like his multi-hour pumpathon on the HA1325 paired with a crisp low speed pump stabilizer. Meanwhile, normal humans like myself will benefit through the sublime beauty of riding foils that make the sport smoother, easier, more intuitive and just more fun! ⋘

CORE
4.5
CORE
ROAMER

RED LETTER DAY

UNFORGETTABLE
SESSIONS

JERI SPRINGER

RIDER & WORDS **LUTZ ENGLERT**
PHOTOS **THOMAS BURBLIES**
LOCATION **JERICOACOARA, BRAZIL**
DATE **THURSDAY DECEMBER 1ST, 2022**

On location for a CORE photoshoot, Lutz Englert got used to trading off the rich offerings to be had at this stunning spot on the Brazilian coast, with the slightly less enjoyable journey getting there. The final day – seen here – made everything worth it…

Jericoacoara, or just Jeri, seems like an oasis between kilometers of shifting sand dunes. Even though there is no actual road – just hundreds of paths through the dunes – it has grown to one of the more touristic hotspots in Brazil. With countless bars, restaurants, and clubs, it feels like a tiny version of Las Vegas, especially at night.

We had been on a daytime mission though. On our trip from Fortaleza up the windy Brazilian coast, we kept an eye on the forecast in Jeri from the very beginning. The reason was that Jeri is not only known for its nightlife, but also for its waves if you hit the right swell. Long, clean waves, traveling from the point down the bay towards the big shifting dunes, was exactly what we were looking for.

Since we weren't staying in Jeri, each trip there was a mission in itself. The paths along the beach are full of potholes and the bumpiest ride you can imagine. We went there at least four days in a row, waiting for the swell to arrive. Jeri has completely banned cars, so you must either book accommodation inside the town, or you pass the town, set up your gear west of Jeri, and tack upwind to the point.

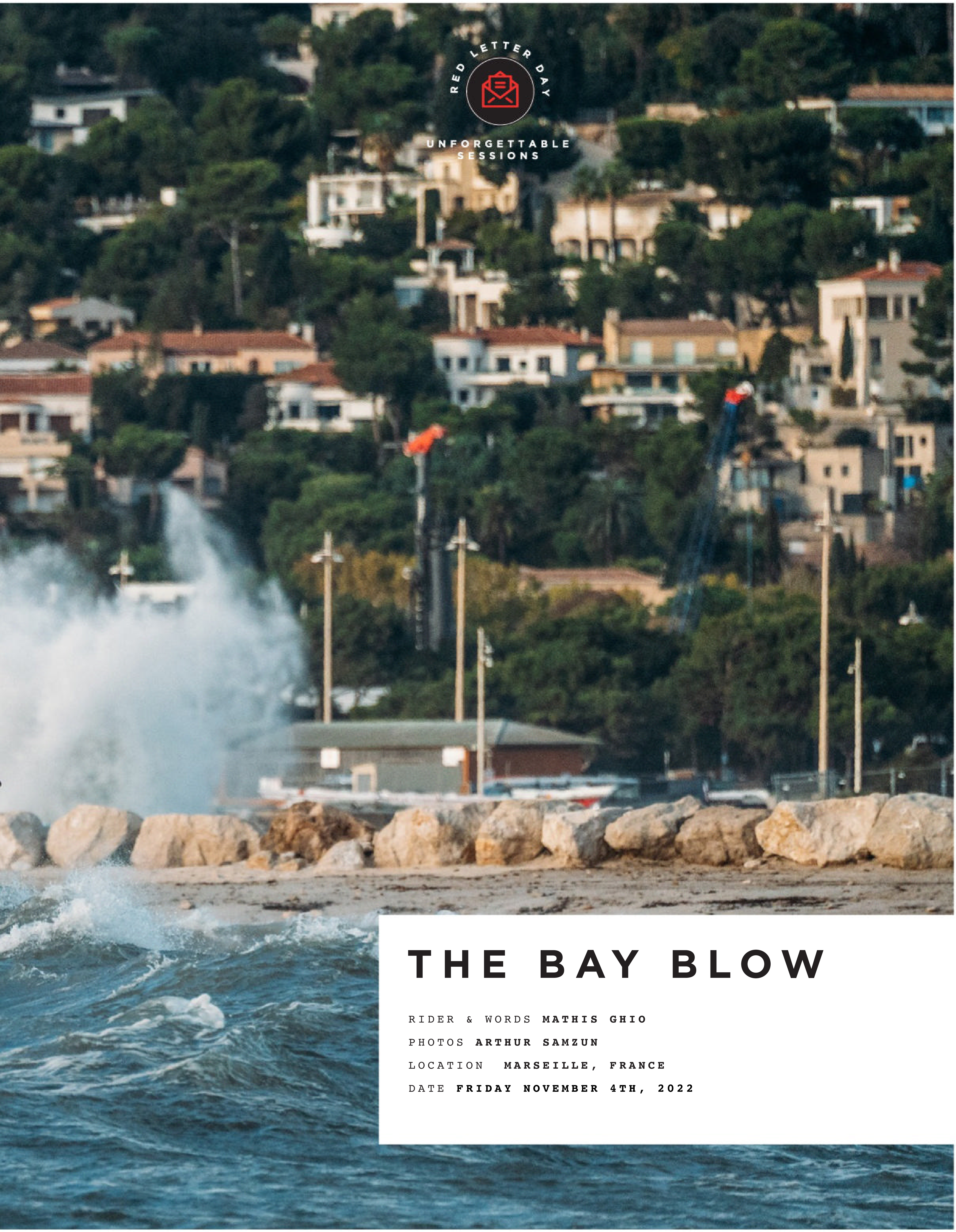
That last day had the best swell forecast, and when we arrived at our spot, we saw multiple windsurfers already at the point. Willow (River Tonkin) and I have been lacking a decent wave session for quite a while, which fueled our levels of excitement even more, even though we couldn't really judge the wave from the distance.

We quickly setup our gear, Thomas and Juli prepped the cameras, and we foiled up to the point. I didn't take long to realize that this was not really what we were looking for. The waves were inconsistent and small, with dozens of windsurfers fighting for the few waves that appeared. Not the wingfoiling heaven we had imagined. We knew that Thomas and Juli had quite a distance to walk from the cars to the point, so we quickly decided to save them from the hike in the burning sun and head back to the cars.

At the spot shown here, the water was calm and flat, with only a few waves breaking right at the beach. With the sun warm on our backs, the picturesque coastline of Jeri was cast in the perfect light. The lush green vegetation, the massive dunes and the vibrant blue water appeared to be the perfect setting to get some freestyle shots. Even though we didn't score the waves we hoped for, it still paid off with a decent session in a setting to remember.

Ultimately, Brazil should be on the list for every wingfoiler. With my mind being biased toward all the flatwater-kite-freestyle lagoons, I was surprised how many good spots it delivered, looking at it through the fresh eyes of a wingfoiler. We have found perfect, deep, sweet water lagoons, decent waves along the multiple beaches and yes, we also struggled occasionally with water that was too shallow or beach breaks that were too strong, but that's the way it goes, and the charm of adventure. The warm climate and consistent wind make it easy to discover the country and drive to multiple spots in a day though, which will probably hand you more spot variety than any other country. ⋘

LEVICA
GLIDE



RED LETTER DAY
UNFORGETTABLE SESSIONS

THE BAY BLOW

RIDER & WORDS **MATHIS GHIO**
PHOTOS **ARTHUR SAMZUN**
LOCATION **MARSEILLE, FRANCE**
DATE **FRIDAY NOVEMBER 4TH, 2022**

Aligning conditions and the schedule of in-demand photographers for an action photo shoot is a tricky operation that's a part of many a pro rider's responsibilities. Forecast apps, webcams, and a choice of locations certainly helps, but sometimes it just comes down to that inherent gut feeling. Fortunately, for champion wingfoiler Mathis Ghio, his instincts didn't let him down…

Photographer Arthur Samzun and I had been planning a shoot together in the South of France for a while. We'd already done several shoots together, but we'd never done one at my home spot. Less than a week before we met up, I was already fixed on the forecasts all around Montpellier (where Arthur lives) and Marseille (where I live) to try to find the best spot for shooting. The closer the date got, the better the conditions were looking for Marseille. Not only that, but the forecast was also looking like one of the most optimal of the year. Although set to be an extremely sunny day, the temperature was due to drop from 20 to 7 degrees Celsius, with a very strong west wind. In Marseille, we call this kind of wind a "bay blow", because it brings some massive waves, and the wind is slightly side-onshore.

With that kind of forecast in the offing, it was impossible to not ride at my home spot in Marseille: La Pointe Rouge. The wind reports were high, but it was almost impossible to find a correct webcam to look at the waves. They were extremely salty and dirty, compared to how they'd looked the day before so I took a 5 minute-walk along an elevated spot down my road which allows me to check out the state of Marseille's Bay, and to figure out the exact place where the shoot would take place. When I arrived, the sun was absent, blocked by clouds, the wind was stormy, and the waves were crashing onto the seawalls of Marseille's Bay. It was a chaotic first impression, and I started to lose confidence in my spot choice but Arthur was due to arrive in 30 minutes so I chose to trust the forecast and prayed it would run smoothly and told him that we'd meet at the Vieille-Chapelle beach, a unique beach, with a small bay that sits between two unparallel seawalls over on the right hand side and has a very big and aggressive peak for jumping. On the left sits a really big bay, which gets softer and longer lines.

GLIDE

GLIDE
WIP

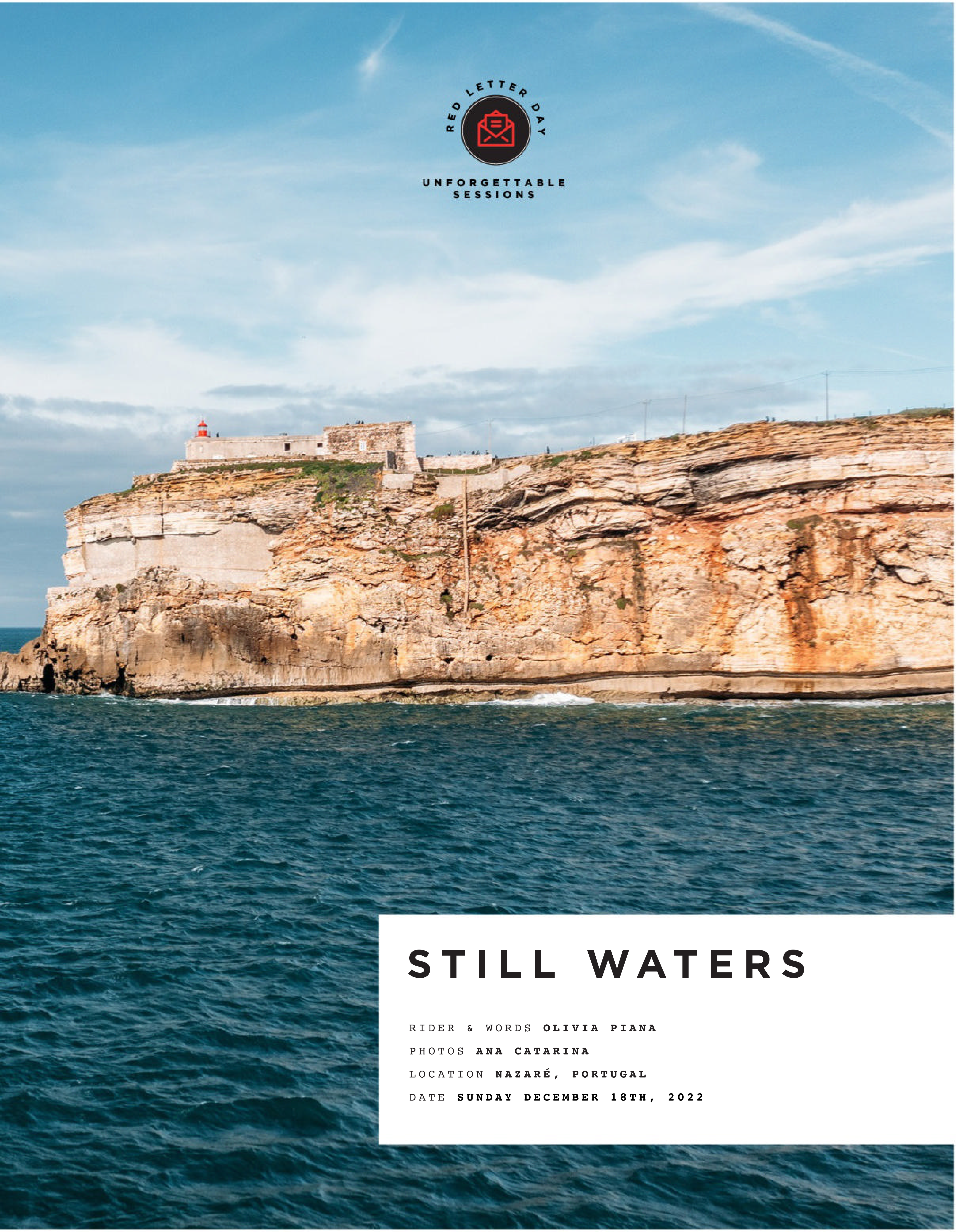
> "THE MOOD COMPLETELY CHANGED, AND THE WIND WAS COMING BACK STRONGER THAN IT HAD BEEN THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE DAY, AND WITH BIGGER SWELLS TOO."

When I arrived, the clouds were occasionally breaking, allowing the sun to shine through. The 30 knots of side-on wind were sensational, and the waves were looking rough but potentially manageable (from one to two meters in the big sets). With these very quick changes that had occurred within the past 40 minutes, I stopped worrying about the weather and started to concentrate on the choice of shim for my 250sqm rear wing! I was now extremely excited to be on the water and to rip these waves. The waves were passing over the seawalls, creating some gorgeous water spray, and consequently making the scenery even better. I had one of my best wingfoil jumping sessions ever in Marseille that day. I was sending backflip after backflip, raileys over Frioul island in the background, and pulled some big turns in the sets.

After that first two-hour session, I had a quick break to grab something to eat, and to talk with Arthur about what kind of pictures we were still missing. As the sun was beginning to set, the light was just getting better and better. The clouds were forming a thick curtain above the horizon, which was creating a fabulous and concentrated light. I'll never forget the feeling of foiling on that orange and pink water surface that was affected by that light.

When the sun disappeared under the horizon, the sky went completely gray and dark, lending a highly dramatic atmosphere to Arthur's lens with this kind of gray shade. The mood completely changed, and the wind was coming back stronger than it had been throughout the whole day, and with bigger swells too. It was feeling like the nature wasn't done at all and had suddenly become angry. At the same time, my muscles were suffering, and I was feeling exhausted. At this point I was only doing long turns in the waves, appreciating the low speed and carves of my Levitaz foil in the swell.

This day was amazing, definitely a Red Letter Day, and one like I'd never had before. And when the bay blow returns, you'll see me in Marseille's water again, but this time from sunrise till sunset.



RED LETTER DAY

UNFORGETTABLE SESSIONS

STILL WATERS

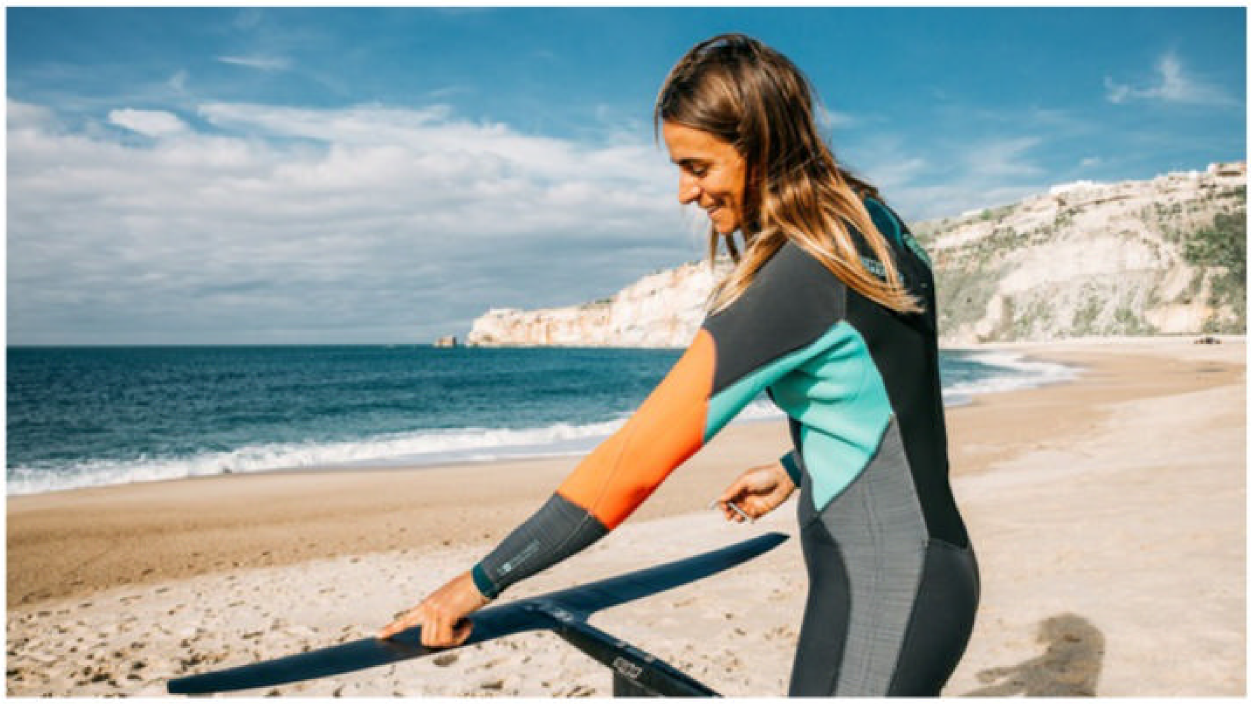
RIDER & WORDS **OLIVIA PIANA**

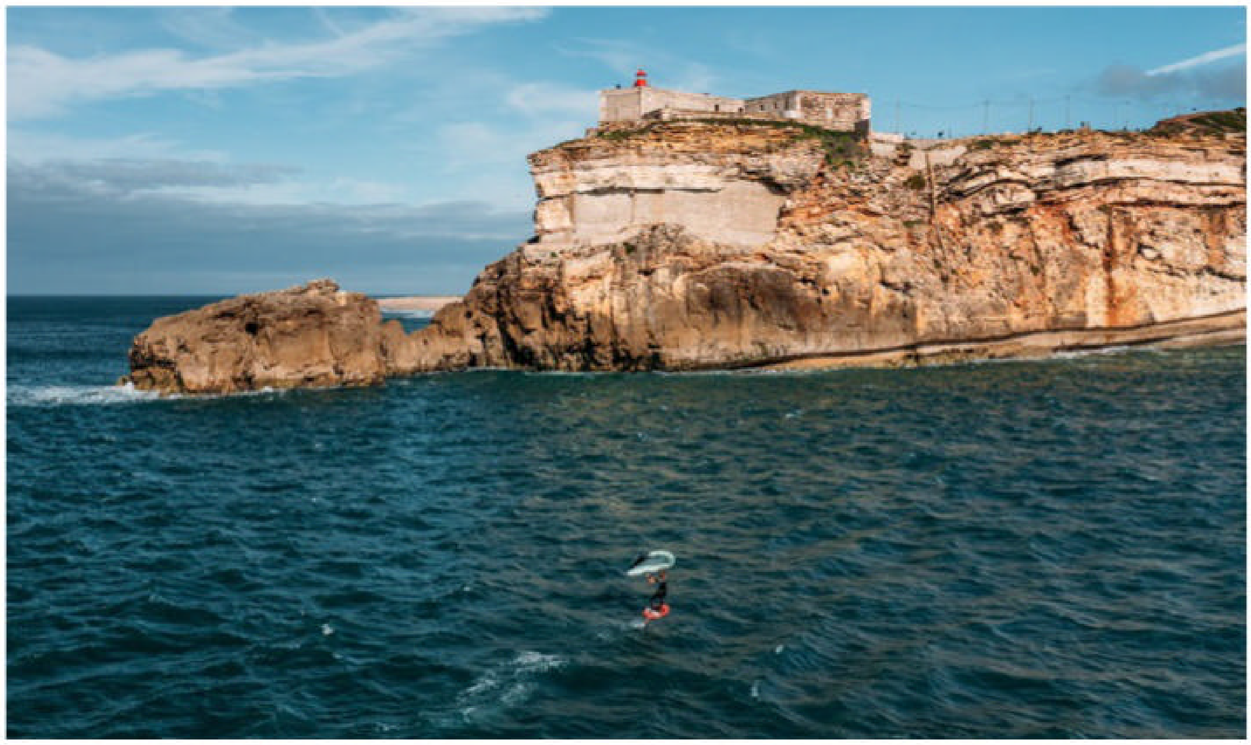
PHOTOS **ANA CATARINA**

LOCATION **NAZARÉ, PORTUGAL**

DATE **SUNDAY DECEMBER 18TH, 2022**

Synonymous with the world's biggest waves and some of the most terrifying shorebreak on the planet, Nazaré in Portugal is unlikely to become a go-to wing foil Shangri-La anytime soon. However, caught on those rare days when it's swell-free, and it can feel like a totally different place…





It was a beautiful winter's day. I was excited to get on the water and shoot with my friend and talented photographer, Ana Catarina. I arrived in Nazaré at around 9:30am. Ana offered me a coffee at Maya Gabeira's house, the spot's best female big wave surfer. We walked from the house to the top of the cliff to check how things were looking at the spot and north along this wild coast.

From the top of the cliffs, the ocean looked very calm. The wind from the southeast was starting to pump. Usually, this wind brings clouds and rain, but that day it was quite sunny. Ana told me it was probably possible to get in the water from the south end of Nazaré beach. I'd never have imagined that… I've always seen this place with a huge shore break! So, launching with a wing foil there… Are you sure?! But once we got to the spot, I was reassured as it was incredibly flat. We were joined by Hélène, a friend from Péniche. We brought all the gear onto the sand and prepared to get in the water.

It was hard to get an idea of how strong the wind was, as it was offshore and gusty. I chose my larger gear in this instance as I didn't want to struggle to fly at this spot. What an incredible session it was… Incredible because these conditions are very rare. It was a unique opportunity to wing here in the middle of winter, and incredible to have the opportunity to feel the mystical energy of this place, out there near the infamous point. Even though it was totally flat, you can sense the potential of the place. Even then, it was not easy to sail in the backwash coming off the point… there was so much turbulence, even in these flat conditions.

I had visited Nazaré many times to sit on top of the cliff and watch the big wave surfers, but I'd never had the opportunity to notice the orange and golden colors of the cliff face on the south side. Simply beautiful. Nowadays, I rarely wing foil in flat waters as I prefer to get out in the waves. But on this day, we sailed for several hours with Hélène, just because it was a huge thrill to be out there. Both of us out on this magical spot! Ana Catarina shot with the drone and then she went in the water for some water shots. Her favorite thing is definitely swimming with her camera! She knows exactly what angle she wants to shoot and what picture she wants to get. It's always a pleasure to work with her.

We got out of the water in the middle of the afternoon, just before the soccer world cup finals between France and Argentina. I'm not a big soccer fan but I like the atmosphere it can bring. We found the first bar we could that was broadcasting the game. As we sat and talked about this very first wing foiling session in Nazaré, while enjoying a traditional soup and a Portuguese tosta mista, with the excitable atmosphere of the world cup finale, it all felt pretty unique and special. It was such a beautiful day to remember. ⋘

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RIDERS **BRIAN FINCH & GUENTHER OKA**
PHOTOS **GARRETT CORTESE**
LOCATION **SATELLITE BEACH, FLORIDA**
DATE **WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 26TH, 2022**

A planned photoshoot in the shadow of the Kennedy Space Center in Florida gave Freedom Foil Boards team riders Brian Finch and Guenther Oka a chance to share some waves and put in some time on FFB's latest creations, as well an opportunity to appreciate and learn from each other's unique riding styles.

BRIAN

Recently I had the pleasure of meeting up with world-class Liquid Force rider Guenther Oka and staff photographer Garrett Cortese, three hours south of Jax Beach, Florida, on the Space Coast. The past two hurricanes ate away at the dunes and sandbars, leaving a tidal window of around two hours of breaking waves off of the low tide.

Knowing this, I got up early and drove from Jax to Melbourne to search for an uncrowded wave breaking far enough off the beach to foil. I pulled into five different parking lots on the way down to Melbourne Beach to scope the waves. There were viable options, but the tide was still too full. Guenther reached out to some of the local foil crew and got a confirmation on a nice peak. The three of us met up in a parking lot and assembled our foils. Guenther and I instantly got to sharing our excitement about Freedom Foil Boards's Halcyon 810. Not many people have had the opportunity to ride this foil yet, so it was great to hear nearly identical feedback from Guenther on the foil's performance and nuances. Carvey, controlled, and great pumping were the strongest commonalities. We grabbed our gear, walked through the park, down the beach, past the fishing line and chose a peak.

The waves were glassy, waist to chest high, peeling towards the shore then fading into deeper water and unbroken bumps before exploding into the shore break. The steep drop from the beach into the water created a nice amount of backwash for pumping back out to the peak. A couple of the locals were already out there, ripping, and double dipping! Being Garrett's first water housing ocean shoot, we gave him a couple of tips and paddled out. I think I started off with a faceplant, but then got a couple fun waves in a row.

I was really impressed by Guenther's riding skills. It became immediately obvious that Guenther is a world-class athlete when I watched him catch a wave, bash the whitewash, pump through a speed section and effortlessly land a strapless air. 99% of foilers can't do that, and this isn't even his main sport! I'm not the first person to say it, but all these professional wakeboarders-turned-foilers have had a big impact on the aerial game in foiling. Guys like Austin Tovey, Noah Flegel, and now Guenther Oka, bring a heightened body awareness in the air, from doing crazy flips and tricks behind a boat. The wakeboarders/wake foilers have a repetition advantage versus ocean foilers, and when these hours of repetition are translated to the ocean, they excel. I could see this in Guenther, he rips exceptionally hard for the amount of hours he has spent in the ocean.

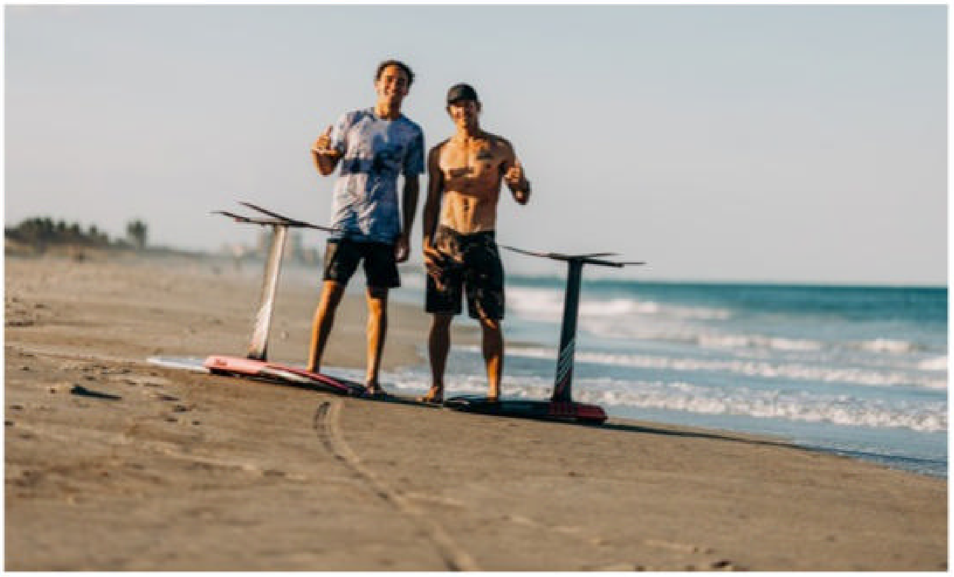
It was great catching up with the Space Coast foil crew, and comparing notes on hurricane beach erosion, downwind runs, and tow spots. After a lot of waves, pumping, hooting and smiles, the wind came up and the sun was going down. We wrapped up the session, hung on the beach for a bit, and thanked the locals. While packing up our gear I invited Guenther up north and he invited me to the lake, so I guess we're doing both!

GUENTHER

I woke up the morning of the shoot with a touch of anxiety before picking up my phone. I opened Surfline to see the forecast calling for 1-2ft with light winds. The wind part was great, but the swell was just so tiny I was thinking this shoot was going to be a bust. And to make things worse, Brian Finch was making the three-hour drive from Jax Beach down to Satellite Beach for our first shoot together with Freedom Foil Boards. So here I am, the pro wakeboarder and foil nerd, trying to call shots at the beach where I don't live to get some high-quality photos. Sounds like a recipe for disaster.

But there had been rumblings of one to two spots that were working at dead low tide down through Satellite. The intel came from our foil crew on the Space Coast, who all have the foil bug. These guys will shred on ankle-high waves so I knew they could help us get some waves even with tricky conditions. Once I got the pin, I forwarded it to Brian, and we decided on a meet-up spot.

Upon arriving, the tide was finally dropping out and our coveted foil bumps were starting to appear. It was Brian's second or third time down south, but I think he knew what to expect coming in from Jacksonville. We were going to have these mushy rolling waves with just enough push to get into the wave and then let the pumping begin. That seems to be Florida in a nutshell, but on the foil, it's like our own paradise out there. As the session started to unfold, the wind died off, the sky matched the blue of the water, and we began lining things up with our photographer, Garrett Cortese. Garrett is a word class wakeboard photographer and him and I have spent a lot of time shooting in the nice, controlled environment of the lake. It was exciting to get him out of his comfort zone and put his skills to the test in the ocean.



I was riding the 4'2 FTW Pro and the new Halcyon 810 from Freedom Foils. The aspect ratio on that foil works so well for Florida and the kind of waves we have. We definitely spend a lot of time pumping to connect the dots so we need a foil that can cover ground. However, when the wave starts to peel it's nice to have the maneuverability to surf the pocket and try to tag the lip here and there. So as the session rolled on, I was going for wing breaches, drawn-out carves, and the occasional air when the section allowed it.

It was fun getting to share waves with Brian and see his flow in person. There are so many different styles in foiling, but I have a huge appreciation for Brian's approach to it. The upper body is relaxed and loose, but he draws a lot of power into his turns from there. Coming from a wakeboarding background where we always have a handle in our hand, we rely less on the coil movement of our upper body and more on the tension the rope provides. So, breaking those habits and letting the upper body swing is something I work on and I'm sure others struggle with too. It's rad to be in the water and take notes from someone like that.

As the sun started the drop and the wind kicked in, Brian and I had foiled ourselves out. Some of the Space Coast crew came and joined us for the session as well. It was fun to catch up on the walk back in, compare gear, and talk shop per usual. It was a day that came together perfectly, but I'm always itching for something bigger and better. Hopefully you'll be able to see the photos here too when that time comes...

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It recently dawned on us that our "Eyewitness" news slot was, more often than not, covering all things competition – GWA or otherwise. So we felt it was high time to give contest coverage that dedicated slot it deserved. So here it is, The Leaderboard, with recent round ups and coverage of the biggest wing and foil tournaments across the worldwide competitive sphere.

REPORTING **JIM GAUNT / GWA**

COPA KITLEY GWA WINGFOIL WORLD CUP

BRAZIL 2022
Taiba, Brazil
16-20 November 2022

The far north of Brazil is one of the world's premium destinations for wingfoiling – constant trade winds, warm water, beautiful weather all year round and consistent rolling swells that are perfect for hydrofoils to ride. Therefore it was a natural stop for the fifth and final event of the GWA Wingfoil World Tour 2022!

In previous Surf-Freestyle events this season, riders have competed in freestyle trick formats on flat water. The Brazilian event would be the first event that featured waves, and riders were scored on their two best wave rides and single freestyle trick in each of their heats.

EARLY ROUNDS & HIGHLIGHTS

The Copa Kitley GWA Wingfoil World Cup Brazil included both the Surf-Freestyle and Surf-Slalom disciplines, deciding who would take the final World Championship crowns.

In the men's Surf-Freestyle, French teen Malo Guénolé put on a sublime performance throughout the entire competition to overtake tour leader, Golito Estredo (VEN), in the rankings to take the title. Estredo is a nine-time windsurfing World Champion but was under fire from Guénolé's high scoring heat performances from the start.

In Surf-Slalom, riders race round short format courses that usually consists of mostly fast, downwind runs mixed with a short upwind section and a pumping section, during which they must pump their foils for momentum without using the power of the wing.

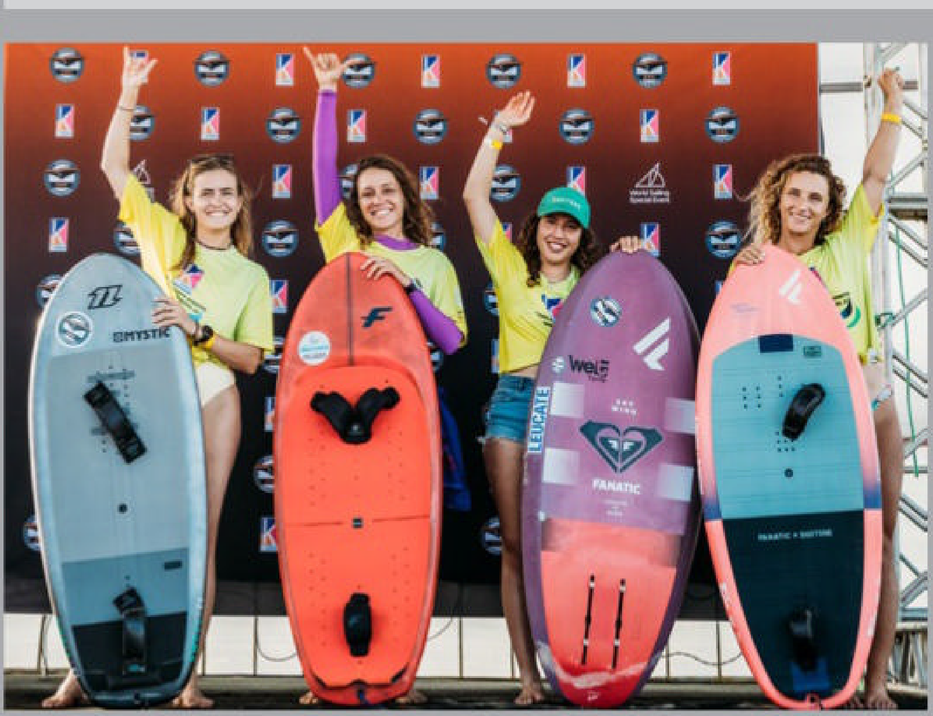
SURF FREESTYLE

1st Place Women: Flora Artzner (FRA)

The 29-year-old adapted fastest to wave riding after a season that featured only freestyle tricks on flat water at the two previous Surf-Freestyle events in the 2022 season in France and Switzerland. The fact that Flora spent so much time continuing to ride waves when others were resting between heats is testament to how she earned her win here by just having fun in the conditions. Having taken a break from her career as a marine biologist to commit to the tour, the French rider's constant arcing flow, back and forth, up and down the faces, really left its mark on this event.

Overall GWA Wingfoil World Tour Surf-Freestyle World Champion: Paula Novotna (CZE)

Discarding the fourth-place finish in Brazil as her worst position of the year, Paula wins her first world title after crossing over to wingfoiling, following a decade competing at the top level in freestyle kiteboarding. A fierce competitor, three back-to-back freestyle event wins in flat water conditions in Switzerland, Lanzarote and Spain meant that Paula was already World Champion coming into this final event. Although she had the championship already sealed, Paula Novotna was disappointed not to make the final, having lost out to current champion, Bowien van der Linden in the semis.



Women's Brazil World Cup podium
Winner Flora Artzner (FRA), 2nd place Bowien van der Linden (NED), 3rd place Nia Suardiaz (ESP), 4th place Paula Novotna (CZE)

Women's Overall World Championship podium
World Champion Paula Novotna (CZE), runner-up Nia Suardiaz (ESP) and third place Flora Artzner (FRA)

SURF FREESTYLE CONT.

1st Place Men & 2022 GWA Wingfoil World Tour Surf-Freestyle Men's World Champion: Malo Guénolé (FRA)

The 17-year-old has shown the most radical progression in both flat-water freestyle conditions and in waves this season. Lying in second coming into this event, Guénolé's explosive and dynamic wave riding, combined with huge technical tricks off the kickers piled pressure on tour leader Golito Estredo (VEN) who had a nightmare heat in round four and went out of the competition. Still needing to reach the final to claim the title, Guénolé continued to put the hammer down and streaked to a stunning event win as the highest heat scorer in every round.

Men's Brazil World Cup podium
Winner Malo Guénolé (FRA), 2nd place Camille Bouyer (FRA), 3rd place Maxime Chabloz (SUI), 4th place Titouan Galea (FRA)

Men's Overall World Championship podium
World Champion Malo Guénolé (FRA), runner-up Gollito Estredo (VEN) and third place Camille Bouyer (FRA)

FINAL STANDINGS WOMEN'S SURF FREESTYLE

1 Paula Novotna (CZE)

2 Nia Suardiaz (ESP)

3 Flora Artzner (FRA)

FINAL STANDINGS MEN'S SURF FREESTYLE

1 Malo Guénolé (FRA)

2 Gollito Estredo (VEN)

3 Camille Bouyer (FRA)

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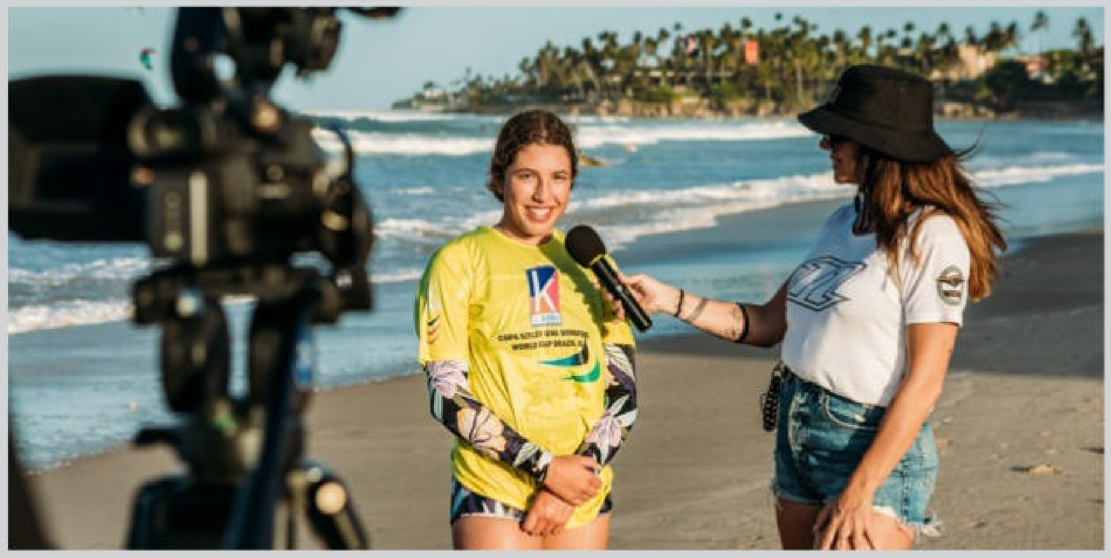
SURF SLALOM

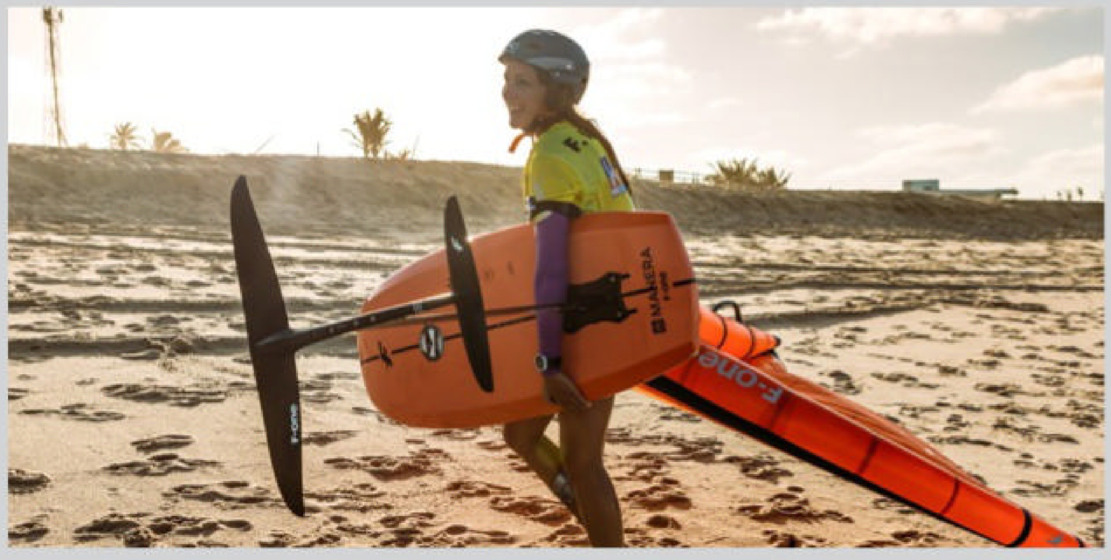
1st Place Women: Nia Suardiaz (ESP)

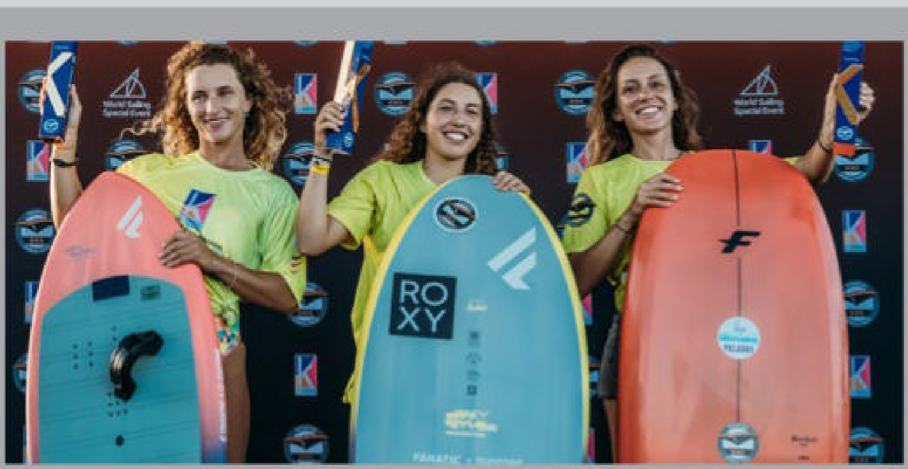
After six straight wins the previous day, Nia Suardiaz had been doing all she could to try to catch women's tour leader, Flora Artzner. Still only 17, Nia Suardiaz finished runner-up in both the Surf-Slalom and Surf-Freestyle Championships. After a phenomenal year, the 2022 season perhaps finishes bittersweetly for her after managing to blaze her way to this final event victory by winning eight of the 11 Surf-Slalom races in Brazil.



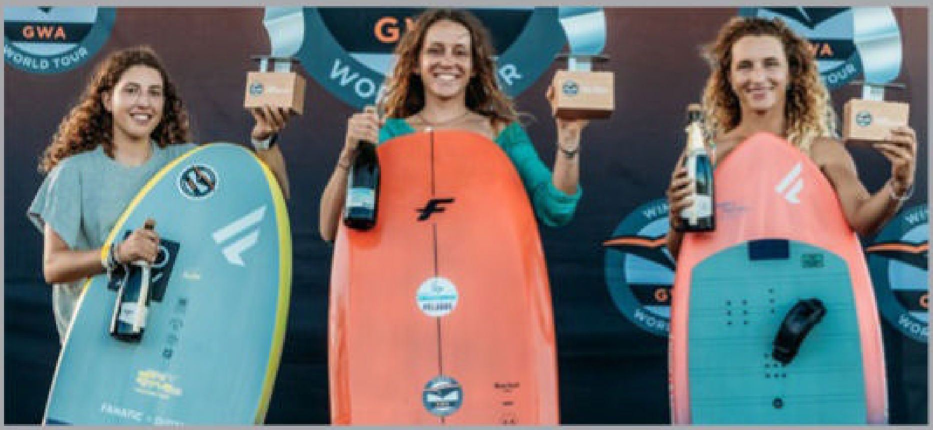
2022 GWA Wingfoil World Tour Surf-Slalom Women's World Champion: Flora Artzner (FRA)

Flora Artzner only needed to finish in fourth or better at this event to claim her first title. Artzner played it cool and stayed in and around the positions she needed to be in each of the eleven races completed by the women over two days Surf-Slalom heats. In the final race, Artzner indeed crossed the line in fourth, giving her third position overall here in Brazil and first at the end of the season. Nia Suardiaz dominantly won the event, but Flora Artzner is the 2022 GWA Wingfoil Surf-Slalom World Champion!





Women's Brazil World Cup podium
Winner Nia Suardiaz (ESP), 2nd place Paula Novotna (CZE), 3rd place Flora Artzner (FRA)



Women's Overall World Championship podium World Champion Flora Artzner (FRA), runner-up Nia Suardiaz (ESP) and third place Paula Novotna (CZE)

FINAL STANDINGS WOMEN'S SURF SLALOM

1 Flora Artzner (FRA)

2 Nia Suardiaz (ESP)

3 Paula Novotna (CZE)

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SURF SLALOM CONT.

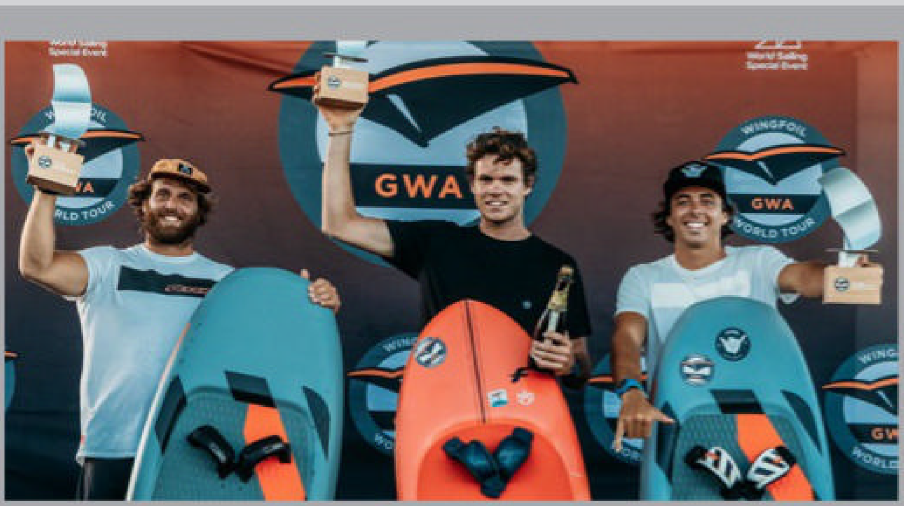
1st Place Men: Mathis Ghio (FRA)

One of the fastest riders in a straight line shoot out, Ghio finally found the consistency around the whole course that he lacked earlier in the season. Once again, in Brazil he streaked away off the start line, but this time managed to maintain his advantages, winning both elimination finals on the final day.

2nd Place Men & 2022 GWA Wingfoil World Tour Surf-Slalom Men's World Champion: Titouan Galea (FRA)

A pioneering star of this young sport, Titouan's heart may lie in riding big waves on his wingfoil, but he retains his Surf-Slalom world title thanks to his brave upwind tactics and seemingly effortless downwind pace that has delivered him two event wins and a second place here in Brazil. Coming into this event, Galea needed only to finish in the top three to be assured of the title. Two dominant wins on day one in Brazil meant that, despite a nervy eleventh and fourth position in the final day of racing, Galea finished this event in second, sealing the title.

Men's Brazil World Cup podium
Winner Mathis Ghio (FRA), 2nd place Titouan Galea (FRA), 3rd place Francesco Cappuzzo (ITA)



Men's Overall World Championship podium
World Champion Titouan Galea (FRA), runner-up Francesco Cappuzzo (ITA) and third place Camille Bouyer (FRA)

FINAL STANDINGS MEN'S SURF SLALOM

1 Titouan Galea (FRA)

2 Francesco Cappuzzo (ITA)

3 Camille Bouyer (FRA)

Check out the full GWA 2023 calendar at: wingfoilworldtour.com/events

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200 NORTH NOVA LW 7M
201 CORE SPECTRUM 1250
202 CABRINHA MANTIS V3
202 RRD BLAST 900 & QUICKLOCK PLATE
203 AXIS PNG 1310
204 FREEWING PRO 4M + AK ETHER LOW BACK HARNESS
206 FREEDOM NUGGET 4’7
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SLINGSHOT LTF 6'

Slingshot has launched a new platform for beginners to start their wingfoiling journey. The all new LTF or "Learn To Fly" inflatable series is a versatile board with a strong emphasis on stability and ease of use for new riders. Integrating both a foil track mount, and keel fin slots, the LTF platform is designed to get complete beginners with no experience moving on the water and transitioning into their first glides on foil. The option to start with keel fins helps remove some of the intimidation factor of the full foil kit and allows new riders to build confidence and comfortability with simplified gear before taking on the foiling challenge.

With a very wide outline the LTF is incredibly stable and easy to balance. The inflatable design keeps the board light weight compared to a composite board of a similar size. A soft deck mounted carry handle makes transport and launching easy. Slingshot has integrated a carbon bottom plate to facilitate a stiffer platform for foiling. The Slingshot LTF 6'0 x 34" x 6" @ 180L was tested using a 1300 surf foil, 3m wing, wind 25-30mph. Rider 6'4, 170lb.

As a beginner platform the LTF excels in stability, the balance position is huge. Even when standing near the rails the LTF will stay upright, and not tip over. The inflatable TPU construction has a softer feel than a composite board, so there is an element of added safety when crashing or accidentally landing on the board. Using the inflation valve located on the nose of the board, the LTF will perform best when pumped up hard towards the upper end of the recommended inflation pressure. Mounting the foil or the keel fin is quick and easy with industry standard hardware. Configuring the LTF with the keel fin setup is almost exclusively for beginners or first day wingers. The added surface area of the keel fin does help the board track, and is a great way for a first exposure to being pulled across the water by a wing, however maintaining upwind ground is quite difficult so riders with more experience should dive right into the foil setup.

Mounting the foil to the LTF is the same as any other board and uses standard M6/M8 hardware. The long tracks allow for a significant amount of adjustability so any foil can be perfectly tuned in. Due to the long length of the carbon bottom plate, the LTF does not have a significant flexing point in front of the foil. When everything is fully pumped and mounted securely the LTF is one of the stiffer inflatable platforms available.

Experienced riders that are coming from a traditional composite board should expect a brief adjustment period as inflatable boards do have a different feel. The air gap inside the board does provide a dampening effect so the ride is a bit smoother with less feedback from the foil. Also, as with all inflatable boards, there are no bottom

NORTH NOVA LW 7M

North's Nova wing has now reached its second iteration and has been very well received, lauded as an elegant and balanced wing with a dual mini boom handle system that doesn't generate much fatigue. North's primary wing designer, Dano See, lives on the north Philippines coast, where there's gentle wind for a decent proportion of the year, so it makes perfect sense that North have developed a lightwind-oriented wing. North have designed the Nova LW as a one size quiver topper, which you should decide on dependent on some body weight thresholds they've clearly set out.

The LW version appears to be a complete stand-alone design from the smaller Nova, and other than sharing fittings and fixtures, it's a markedly different shape and design direction very much tailored towards lower wind speeds. For a big fella, it's been on a major weight loss diet, losing the windows as well as employing lightweight bladders in the front tube and strut. The single-point inflation has been blanked off, and the strut and leading edge inflate separately using the familiar screw in bayonet system. There's also far less beefy scuff protection weighing it down. The result of this is particularly noticeable where you may end up holding the wing statically waiting for a gust to get foiling. Rounded wingtips, and a compact span will broaden its appeal to a wider range of rider heights, promoting easier handling for a big unit, and avoiding the dreaded tip drag.

The leading edge and strut have a chunky diameter that fades out into the tips, and combined with the rigid mini booms provide an ultra-stiff airframe and direct feel, which is super important in a lightwind model. The trailing edge has been optimized to get you upwind, often a sticking point with larger wings, and whatever witchcraft they've employed has worked wonders on this with the Nova LW having impressive forward pull. Four mini battens also sit along the trailing edge to minimize flapping here as it reaches the top of its power range. The package is well presented in typical North style, with a decent sized recycled bag with a single shoulder strap. The wrist leash is a bungee covered webbing affair with a comfortable and secure feeling constricting closure. For a 7m, it packs down surprisingly small considering its size and handles.

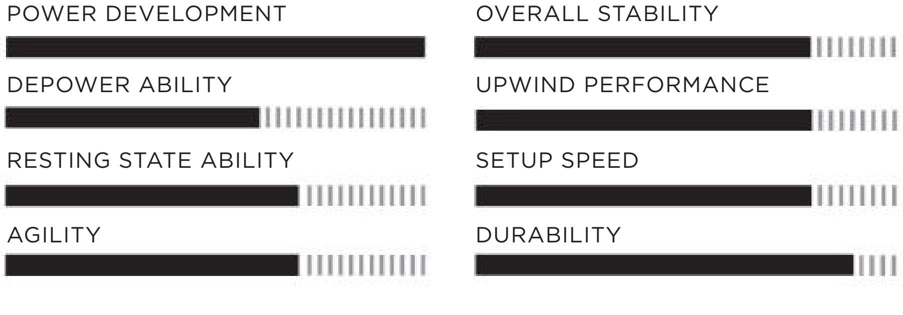
NOVA
NOVA
NORTH
NOVA
LIGHT WIND
7.0

On the water the fairly loose canopy fills with air in an almost spinnaker-like fashion. The canopy is extended along the truly lengthy strut and the aspect ratio is on the low and grunty side, which in the conditions it's designed for is exactly what's required. Not much pumping or talent is required to get moving – offer the wing to the wind, and it simply fills with air and provides piles of torque to get you onto the foil. For so much sail, it's surprisingly easy to handle, and for large wings particularly, the perfect diameter rigid booms yield some definite benefits, and allow you to twist the wing through slower transitions and avoid the wing tipping out. It likes to be handled high and flat, being very easy to slide into a tack without creating any irritating downward pressure when it's overhead. Whilst the low end is terrific, once it does get overpowered, it's manageable, but you'll want to change down pretty swiftly compared to its smaller siblings, which you can hold onto almost interminably.

From our perspective the Nova LW pairs best with a sleek lined neutral buoyancy board and larger, more efficient and probably high aspect ratio hydrofoils. We found ourselves venturing out in what would have previously been extremely dubious conditions and having some fun in some small waves and light airs. Miraculously, with a little bit of planning on your wave vs wind angles, and keeping your speed up, the 7m will flag admirably on a wave.

The big Nova LW is surprisingly easy to handle, ridiculously grunty and pushes the boundary of what's currently possible when wingfoiling in light winds. **RB**

NORTH NOVA LW 7M

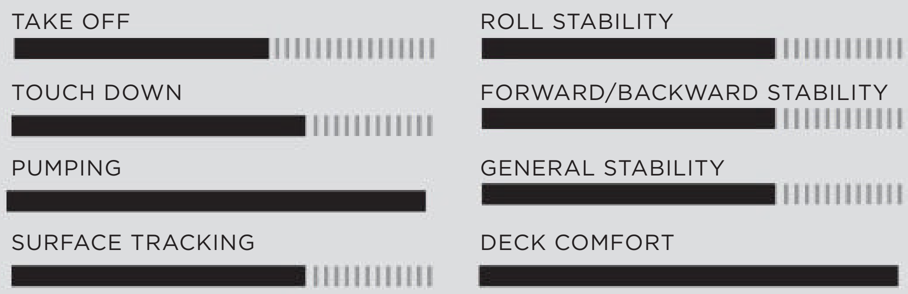


contours so there is a higher degree of 'stickiness'. That said the LTF was a very impressive and easy to ride board and, for beginners, provides a riding experience akin to a composite board so is an excellent starting point.

Overall the LTF is a perfect platform for families looking for one board that is easy for everyone from kids, beginners, or experienced adults to ride, and can easily be packed up, transported, and deployed. The wide outline and light weight make the LTF a champion in stability, and still has performance capabilities to keep intermediate riders entertained. **ST**

SLINGSHOT
SLINGSHOT
LTF

SLINGSHOT LTF 6′



CORE SPECTRUM 1250

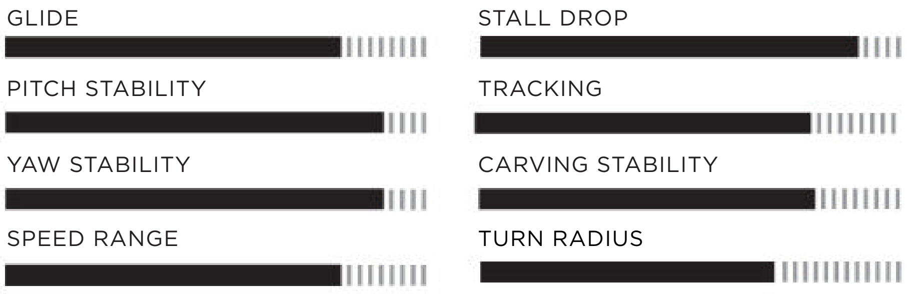
Having already entered the foil market last season with their SLC kite foils, CORE have expanded on their foil offering by releasing the Spectrum foils as part of their newly created wing foil range. The Spectrum is a medium aspect ratio foil designed as an all-round freeride foil to meet the demands of the modern day winger and is available in five sizes from 950cm2 all the way up to 2150cm2 to cover the full range of skill and experience levels.

The foil set comes with an aluminum mast (options of 60, 70, 80 and 90cm) with a sleek low footprint base plate as well as a 70cm aluminum fuselage. The parts fit together well using the supplied Torx bolts and tool with no play in the system and for an aluminum set up the assembled foil is quite light. It should be noted that the CORE foils are sold with or without covers (as the customer desires). We tested the 1250 Spectrum foil with an 80cm mast in combination with the 70L Roamer board (rider weight 78kg). Both front and rear wings are made of carbon laminate constructions which keeps the weight low. The front wing has a slight anhedral shape with slightly swept back wing tips that are turned up to function as winglets. Interestingly, CORE has gone for a slightly larger and lower aspect rear wing. This rear wing has a dihedral shape to allow the foil to roll into turns, and the lower aspect ratio gives added stability and lift.

Getting going on the Spectrum is easy with good low-end lift and the foil having a comfortable amount of front foot pressure. The longer fuselage gives the foil a very stable and reassuring feel when cruising along and initiating turns is easy with the foil rolling over nicely. The longer fuse and larger rear wing do give the Spectrum (at least in the size tested) a slightly wider turning radius but this is negligible compared to how easy the foil is to roll from rail to rail and how comfortable the foil is through the turn. This lets you hold turns longer and commit harder with confidence. Given that the foil is a thicker mid aspect foil, the Spectrum pumps well allowing you to connect the dots and get through flatter sections with ease and the general system (mast, fuse, foil) is stiff and responsive with no delay following rider input. Although it's not a fast foil when cruising, the Spectrum has an impressive top end and is comfortable at speed down steeper faces. It doesn't feel like you are being held back, but also doesn't outrun the wave or feel overpowered which allows you to wave ride in bigger conditions whilst still remaining in control and working on pushing your boundaries and riding. The mini winglets / upturned wingtips really help with ventilation meaning that tip breaches are not something to be worried about which again helps to give you the confidence to push your turns.

Overall, CORE has produced a well thought out, all round foil that is confidence inspiring as well as easy and fun to ride with sizes and options to suit all riding levels complementing the XC wing and Roamer board. The 1250 is a great beginner / intermediate foil (depending on rider weight) for those who want to progress their riding across all disciplines thanks to its responsive nature and ease of use. **JM**

CORE SPECTRUM 1250



CABRINHA MANTIS V3

CABRINHA
MANTIS 4

It's been a comprehensive product launch for Cabrinha in 2023, and their existing all-rounder Mantis wing range has had a major overhaul to push its performance and usability even further than before. Sitting alongside the all-new Vision, which is a more forgiving and less grunty wing with a little more dihedral, the Mantis is geared for instant power on sheet and a precise, direct feel without being overly technical to handle. Sizes run from 2m up to a 7m, with half meter increments up to 5m catering for every situation and conditions you could think of.

Off the bat, there's been some serious upgrades, the most noticeable and tangible of which is the new molded semi-rigid handles, which are an intelligent evolution over the previous model. These comprise of a solid piece of aluminum bar, covered in EVA. The clever bit comes where the handle end spans down and attaches to the strut. This section has a soft rubbery coating and articulated bending almost flat to the strut under load, meaning it won't ding your board. The grips are a low diameter avoiding fatigue and arm pump. There are also spacers available which sit under the feet of the strut connection to allow you to tailor how far from the strut you'd like the handle to sit. You can also set this up with one spacer at an angle if you wish. The handles bolt on and off with a T30 Torx fixing, the same as Cabrinha's hydrofoil fixings. There are two sizes, with the larger handle at the front on the bigger wings for increased trim options upwind and downwind through maneuvers. In practice, the handles make for a refreshingly direct and connected feel with a nice tight pump response, but with a little bit of give if you get a pokey gust; the little bit of flex in them helps temper any potential harshness.

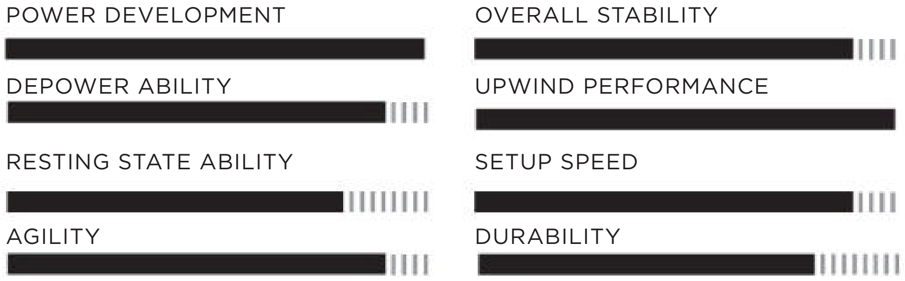
The airframe is noticeably stiffer than previous, with elegantly sculpted layering of material in the center around the strut join and front handle area. The front handle is a reassuringly rigid loop giving you excellent control over any twist in the wing when flagged out on the wave, letting you forget about the wing and concentrate on the business in hand. Through the canopy, a completely different panel layout has been implemented to control any potential deformation better. This has been achieved through locating the seaming in high load areas as well as orientating the ripstop pattern across the load.

The inflation system has had a rework, with twin tubes now feeding air to the strut with neat screw-on valve fixings keeping things very locked in and looking clean. They've also tucked in a classic kite dump valve in the strut to make deflation and pack down a little more fuss free. The TPU valves are also frequency welded on to the bladders to make one homogenous form, making them as tough as possible. Lighter bladders have been implemented across the range, and as an example, the 4m weighs in at a competitive 2.22kg.

The Mantis finds a great balance between stability and accessible power, which is noticeable in the excellent low end. It elegantly crosses over between disciplines well. Its more conservative dihedral exposes a large area of sail to the wind, and it drives forward really well, producing plenty of speed and control. The wing never seems to get backed up and stall with wind hitting the topside even under very aggressive sheeting, which can often be the folly of a flatter design; this is a testament to a well-considered profile. In the larger sizes, we were impressed how little fatigue was induced when overpowered. Rather than feel draggy, the Mantis seemed to push upwind and generate speed.

A worthy upgrade over the V2, the new Mantis is going to be the perfect wing to keep the more sportive rider engaged and aid progression in any genre of riding. It remains a balanced, rapid and agile affair which you can throw into any situation and come out smiling. **RB**

CABRINHA MANTIS V3



RRD BLAST 900 & QUICKLOCK PLATE

RRD has expanded their modular foil system for 2023 and has added to the performance end of their offerings with their Dynamic Pro, Blaze, Spark and Blast foils. We've already tested the Blaze 1250 and Spark 900 which both impressed on the speed and performance front thanks to their thinner foil sections. The Blast is no different and sits in the high aspect ratio category along with the Spark. Interestingly the Spark (AR 9) and the Blast (AR 10) both come in 900cm2 sizes. Whilst the Spark is designed for powered winging, freestyle and wave riding (also evident in its availability in smaller sizes), the Blast is made with efficiency in mind and is the foil of choice for many of RRD's riders when racing in lighter wind conditions.

This Blast was tested with the 85cm aluminum mast (combined with the RRD Quicklock baseplate), 66cm fuse and 195 Blaze rear wing. The assembly of the foil is straightforward, and as noted in previous reviews of other foils in RRD's range, the whole system is incredibly stiff, allowing, the rider a direct connection to the foil. One observation worth noting is that RRD have ensured that all bolts (with the exception of the optional barrel nuts on the fuselage) are M8 therefore only requiring a single tool for assembly. Comparing the Blast to the Spark, the Blast has a higher aspect ratio meaning it has a slightly wider span. Shape wise, the Blast has a negative dihedral shape which allows the foil to roll over nicely into turns. A very thin foil section again ties into the theme of efficiency and really aims to minimize the drag of the foil.

Getting started with the Blast does require a bit of finesse due to the higher AR (RRD does recommend it as a foil for advanced level riders). However, with good pitch management, the foil has a good low end. Once up, even in lighter conditions, the Blast is very quick with little drag, allowing the rider to benefit from the apparent wind generated. The foil holds its course well and lets you cut hard upwind effortlessly. In turns the Blast has a slightly wider turning radius, as a result of its span, but the shape of the foil allows you to roll the foil over effortlessly and lock into wider drawn out carves as opposed to hard snaps. This makes the Blast better suited for slightly bigger mellower waves or open ocean bumps where you have the space for these types of turns. The Blast provides a comfortable amount of front foot pressure and feedback which helps you feel the energy in the water as you ride. This is especially useful when downwinding, something that this foil excels in. Thanks to the efficiency of the foil, it's possible to let go of the wing and just cruise from bump to bump with even the most minimal of bumps providing enough energy to continue gliding. Connecting bumps is effortless thanks to the easy pumping characteristics and speed range of the foil. The Blast is especially well suited to ocean downwinding, where the mix of wind bumps and longer period swells require a foil with a wide speed range to be able to tap into the energy that is available.

All in all the Blast is well suited for anyone looking for a foil that provides performance and efficiency on lighter wind days thanks to

AXIS PNG 1310

From the get-go, AXIS produced a well-engineered heavyweight base system and have never been afraid of making some boundary pushing, high span hydrofoils. The PNG range has always been a benchmark of accessibility in the AXIS range, with the PNG 1150 quietly becoming the pump foiler and lightwind winger secret weapon. Reacting to market demand, they've decided to up the span another 160mm into the colossal PNG 1310. Whilst firmly topping the PNG range, the 1310 has a completely revised foil section.

Its thicker profile means it bolts straight onto the red S-Series fuselage; AXIS have changed things up here as well, providing an 'Advanced' version, bringing the mast 40mm closer to the fuselage. In practice, combined with the 1310 it seems to reduce its pump cadence and improve general maneuverability. We paired it with the progressive 425 rear wing, which offered a pleasant balance of stability and pumpability. Pumping the 1310 is as easy as it gets with only a gentle swipe of the legs required even for a heavier rider. It also gives you plenty of time to recover if you do feel you're starting to stall out. That ease of recovery from low down the mast is perhaps one the most important design attributes for someone learning to pump foil and wanting to extend their repertoire.

Although you need to be mindful of what the 1310 is designed for, it will still go round a corner with a little management, and much better than you'd expect, albeit a much wider one than your current go-to surf foils from the range.

It's perhaps slightly out of its design remit, but in the spirit of testing we paired with a light framed modern materials wing. We managed to get going comfortably and consistently in six to eight knots with a board just over positive buoyancy. It made for a far more entertaining session than expected, allowing us to ride the tiniest bumps of water and pushed the fringes of what's possible in light wind conditions. For someone that's spent the whole winter testing sub 1000cm2 high aspect foils, this was a refreshing change, and really made you have to retrain your steering inputs.

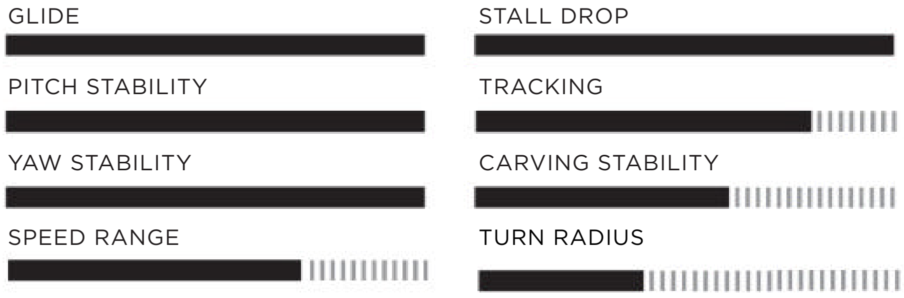
The lift characteristics are definitely early but manageable and not too abrupt, meaning for a pensive learner who's not keen on building speed before takeoff it could be a good choice. We attempted some flat-water paddle ups with a short standard SUP foil, and had some success getting to foil that we truly weren't expecting. We started achieving lift after a burst of four or five well timed paddles and even got some decent pump runs in.

We also had a play with the 1310 with a bungee in some river current. Where previously the HPS 1050 would be our go to for this slightly fringe activity, the 1310 made the whole process far more accessible with lower current speeds, and much less technique was required to get the board out of the water. What we would recommend with the 1310 is you really want to be on the HM Power Carbon mast to maximize the control you have over such a wide span of foil. This seems to translate more subtle bodyweight inputs accurately and banish most of the flex from the system.

Particularly for more full-sized humans and those in the formative stages of pumping and downwinding, the early lift of the 1310 is going to be a powerful ally that could make or break your continuation in the sport. Is it too big and niche I hear you ask? Nah, it's got more application than you think, particularly for the heavier rider where you sometimes fail to proportionally scale your equipment compared to your more whippety mates.

The 1310 combined with the Advanced fuse definitely cement AXIS among the most versatile and complete foil ranges on the market. If straight line pumping, dock starting or downwinding is on your goals list, you'll make your progression happen much more rapidly and easily with this mighty foil. **RB**

AXIS PNG 1310



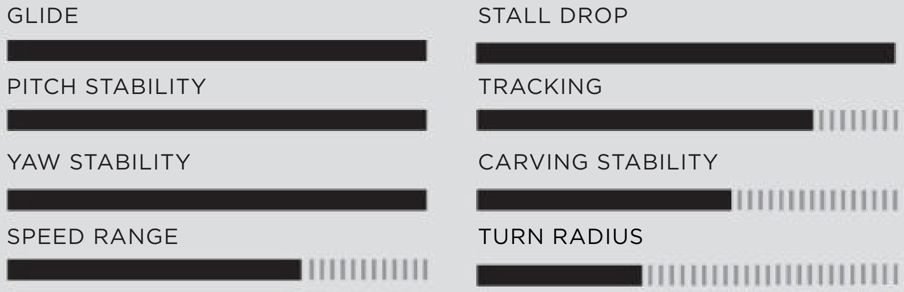
its wide speed range and glide. It is well suited to course racing thanks to its upwind ability and efficiency on foil and additionally doubles as a great option for downwinding.

RRD Quicklock Plate

RRD's Quicklock plate system aims to get you on the water as soon as possible without the hassle of remembering where to put your mast (or putting it in the wrong place) using an innovative single screw system. We tested the Quicklock base plate with the Blaze, Blast and Spark foils quite extensively and when riding there really was no distinguishing between the feel of a normal base plate or the Quicklock plate. Setting your mast up on the board the first time is just like normal, using a conventional base plate that allows you to adjust and tune your mast position in the boxes. Once dialed however, a single screw allows you to undo the mast from the base plate and pivot it out of the base plate to pack away until your next session.

The system utilizes a decent sized footprint for the mast foot within the base plate with the mast foot engaging into a rail before pivoting into the base plate (from the front of the board, meaning that the forces from riding the foil act to help lock the mast in). The mast foot fits into the baseplate in such a way that there is no play in the mast with the width of the rail giving a solid base to eliminate lateral play and the lip at the front in the base plate combined with the M8 securing screw ensures there is no axial play. **JM**

RRD BLAST 900



FREEWING PRO 4M + **AK** ETHER LOW BACK HARNESS

The FreeWing V3 enters its third year and this year the PRO version is released alongside it, pitched quite firmly in the performance race wing sector.

It differentiates itself quite starkly from the standard FreeWing in both materials and shape. The canopy is a full X-Ply construction, a tough, clear laminated material utilized across aerospace, automotive and sports industries. This outperforms standard ripstop in terms of stretch and day-to-day toughness. As we're all painfully aware, a hydrofoil will punch through a standard nylon canopy like a knife through butter; with X-Ply there's a good chance it will just glance off. Two clear windows are situated in the front quarter above and below the strut and the X-Ply material is clear in any case, so you get a decent awareness of what's going on around you, which in a race scenario could be make or break. Sensibly, they've provided a decent sized backpack to make it a simple procedure to get the wing in the bag avoiding having to fold it tightly.

Battens sit in the trailing edge to control flutter and are neatly integrated into the canopy segmentation, which runs leading edge to trailing edge. The angle of dihedral is relatively gentle, presenting plenty of canopy to the wind without compromising the flagging ability too heavily. The handle system comprises of two wide webbing straps with plenty of scope for different arm lengths; perhaps there's been an intentional steer away from rigid handles to help smooth out feedback from a very stiff airframe and canopy.

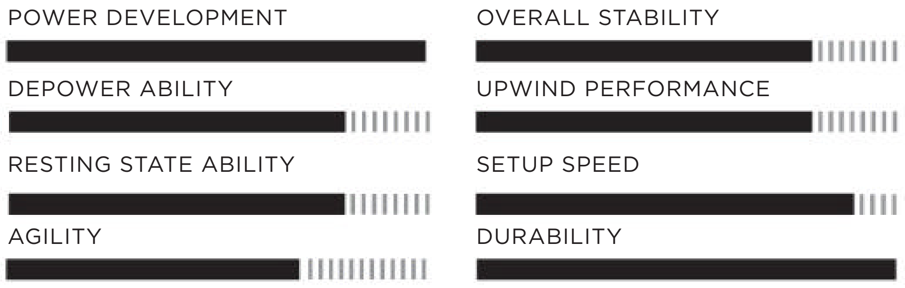
The PRO is perhaps closer to the hyper lightweight Nitro from last year in terms of shape, with a deep canopy with the peak of the profile set further back. Tube diameters are what we'd describe as mid-size for a 4m, and aspect ratio is also increased for a more efficient wing. The wingtips have been firmed up for increased control where the wind spills off. As standard the PRO comes with a wrist leash, with a small neoprene covered stainless swivel located close to the leash point, drastically reducing any bunching on the Dyneema. The front handle is fairly rigid and a sensible size to grab, allowing decent control when flagged.

The frame is comprised from Ho'okipa cloth from Challenge, allowing relatively high inflation pressures – 13PSI for the 4m. This is handled by a large volume Boston-style valve linked to the strut, with an isolator in the tube, and a dump valve on the strut to ease deflation. Having been used for a season or two now, it's proven a stable and hard-wearing material, which isn't as complex to manufacture with or repair as some of the more complex composites now at market.

In practice we found this wing extremely powerful in the hands,

PRO
FREE WING

FREEWING PRO 4M



driving power through your front arm and producing as much grunt as anyone could require. The stiffness built into both the airframe and canopy, combined with the deep centralized profile gave it more of a wait for a gust and sheet characteristic rather than lending itself to generating power with reflex and pumping. Once on foil, that forward drive instantly translates into speed. You'll want to be on a thin profiled foil with a decent top end to get the most out of this wing. Around the triangle, crosswind and downwind are noticeably fast and efficient, upwind takes a little more persuasion, and this is where the harness use comes in as described later.

Through tacks and transitions the X-Ply makes a pleasing thump as the canopy re-engages. It's also nimble enough to handle well around the bends, preferring to be kept high and flat through transitions.

The FreeWing PRO is primarily for those that like to ride powered and fast, although it shouldn't be written off completely for sportive wave and freeride use and is perhaps more versatile than expected. From a weight perspective, savings are made with the Ho'okipa cloth used in the tubes; this balances the weight gained in the X-Ply and, once added up, more or less breaks even with a wing from standard Dacron and ripstop, with the 4m sitting at 2.1kg. This results in a wing that still flags capably on the wave, and loves to ride behind you on your hip once your board speed exceeds the wind.

As you'd expect for a race-derived wing, we found the FreeWing PRO most practical for use with a harness. It's optimized for this with two robust webbing loops built into the handle, allowing simple attachment of a harness loop. Critically, this is also located in the perfect spot on the strut to balance pleasantly and alleviates the front arm pressure. It also allows you to access more angle upwind, potentially important when racing. We found this equally as useful riding a longer point break with a long return upwind. Hook in, chill out and make the angle with ease.

We paired it with the Ether low back harness from sister brand AK Durable Supply Co. This is a wing-specific, lightweight and minimal low-slung harness which sits nicely in the small of the back. The backplate is comprised of a mixture of mesh and EVA which hugs well around your upper hips. Initial placement is an elasticated waist belt with Velcro, and the final closure is a simple plastic buckle and seatbelt-style webbing. The smooth texture to the webbing strap allows the small stainless spreader bar to slide along with ease and allow easy riding toe side with one handed control. The rear of the harness has a PU-coated Dyneema line attached by two stainless D rings, much like a kitesurf handlepass system, but in this case it's an ideal spot to attach your wing or board leash. **RB**

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FREEDOM NUGGET 4’7

Chris Sayer’s garage shaping bay and passion for foiling has now been backed by his old pals at Liquid Force and Freedom Foil Boards (FFB) and has morphed into something far more serious. Hailing from California, the crucible of US surfing, and now with the inclusion of the Hurley Brothers on the team, FFB are setting themselves to be a major player in the foil market across disciplines.

The Nugget is pitched as an unapologetic, no compromises, low-volume wing board designed for both wave and freestyle use. The build is high end and decadent, with a mixture of unidirectional carbon and S glass over a stringer-less EPS core and HD foam block beefing up the all-important track box area. A practical layer of E glass forms a final hard-wearing protective coating over the entire board. The proprietary foil box is 13” long, potentially accommodating a large range of foil ecosystems, and allowing you plenty of options to tune in your foot strap placements of which there are plenty of options. It’s also reassuring to see a pressure release valve for hotter conditions or air travel, a good move for a predominantly black board with an EPS core...

It’s Nugget by name and nugget by aesthetic, with the rear end of the board adorned proudly with gold. The shape is unique and interesting, with a teardrop lower hull shape, not unlike a mini downwind board, leading into the diamond tail rear end. The nose rocker is generous with a slight concave in the nose running through to a flat rear section and defined chines in the rail to aid tracking. Most of the volume in the board sits at the front, so when deep water starting it makes it easy to control below the surface as it always wants to come up forward. We alternated between a full ‘in the straps’ deep-water start, but there’s still enough width for a knee start if necessary in more challenging conditions, hooking your back foot into the strap for stability. For a relatively low volume board, particularly for a 90kg rider, once up at the surface the board’s shape tracks well in a straight line, and with power in the wing makes a good job of releasing fairly rapidly, providing you have power in the wing.

Riding a board this small and light feels electric underfoot, and the low swing weight and decent level of stiffness translates all feedback from the foil well. The slim rear end of the board allows you to go hard and aggressive into turns at more critical sections of the wave without risking catching a rail. When cranking upwind

CORE XC WING

With a long-standing reputation of producing high performing kites, it was only a matter of time before CORE released a wing. Using their extensive team of highly skilled watermen (such as the likes of Willow River Tonkin and Steven Akkersdijk) CORE have developed a complete freeride offering with a wing that excels in all conditions whilst maintaining the high quality and performance associated with the CORE brand. We tested the 4m wing in combination with the 70L Roamer board and the 1250 Spectrum foil.

CORE have gone for an all-round ‘freeride’ wing in the XC with a moderate aspect ratio that aims to deliver plenty of power for freestyle whilst being light enough to ensure good drift for wave riding. The strut and leading edge can be pumped up separately thanks to the double speed valves, though there is a ‘one pump’ connecting tube with a valve if you want to just pump up once. CORE have utilized their ExoTex2 material in the leading edge and strut to create a rigid frame and their low stretch CoreTex2 material has been strategically placed to ensure low stretch and maximal stiffness. What is interesting about the XC is the twist in the wing tips. This twist gives the wingtips a higher angle of attack than the strut, providing an extremely stable wing that remains agile and easy to handle. Although ultimately down to personal preference, it seems that hard handles are gaining popularity in the industry thanks to their direct feel and added control. The XC follows this trend with extra wide handles with a soft coating on them which makes them very comfortable to use. The position of the handles are just right, with enough range that you can easily adjust your grip to the desired position. Accessory wise, the wing comes with a good sized and well thought out bag with plenty of storage, though it should be noted that a leash is not supplied with the wing. This allows the rider the choice between CORE’s waist or wrist leash options as opposed to having a leash option that isn’t their preference.

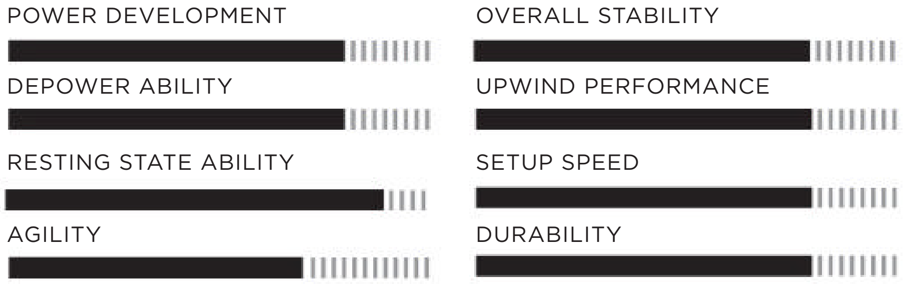
The material selection, design and construction of the wing ensures a taut canopy and this combined with the hard handles gives an impressively direct feel which you notice straight away. The XC definitely prefers to be more powered up. When powered the wing is very responsive and direct and pumping the wing gives instant results allowing you to get on foil effortlessly. In lighter conditions (on the edge of the wing's specified wind range) pumping the wing requires a bit more effort, but thanks to the stiff construction it is still possible to pump yourself up on foil when underpowered. Once riding the wing feels very balanced and stable with no flutter in the trailing edge. The XC goes upwind well, and there is more than enough room to adjust your hand positioning to optimize your upwind angle whilst also ensuring you are in a comfortable position.

4.0
CORE
CORE
XC

CORE has found a great balance of stability and agility with the XC. When tacking, the wing stays perfectly stable overhead allowing you to complete the tack with ease without being pulled off balance or having to contort into awkward positions yet the moment you need it in position it's easy to handle and bring back to exactly where you need it. The same goes for in waves, despite the leading-edge handle being on the smaller side, when wave riding the XC really allows you to focus on your foiling with the wing flagging really well, floating beside you until required. Instant power allows you to get winging again when kicking out of waves and this power on demand also makes it easy to get airborne with the XC.

The XC is an easy-to-use wing with a robust, high-quality construction that is synonymous with the CORE brand. Its direct response combined with its stability make it a great freeride wing for all levels of rider across all disciplines and complements CORE’s complete freeride package. **JM**

CORE XC WING



WINGMAN HARNESS BUNDLE

Father and son team Ronny and Pietro Kiaulehn founded Wingman in early 2022, producing bespoke products specifically for wingfoiling. Ronny has a background in windsurf harness design, all the way back to the 90's working on innovative products with the Fanatic R&D team. Pietro rides for Naish internationally, and is no stranger to a sewing machine, initially making his own impact vests to protect himself during his progressive freestyle and race riding, as well as helping his dad's bad back. It was immediately clear to them there was a gap in the market.

Sometimes a new sport requires a fresh approach to the soft goods that support it, and with wingfoiling spreading its (erm…) wings into race and freestyle disciplines, it's clear that the most natural and practical position of the spreader bar on your harness is far higher than waist height, particularly if you want to minimize the amount of harness loop attached to the wing, which can prove irritating and flappy when pumping.

The solution to the conundrum is the Wingman Vest and Harness combo.

The system comes in three distinct modular parts, the basis being a neoprene waistcoat with a large EVA and carbon plate that slots neatly into the back providing near motorbike-level armor protection. Internally a large slick skin panel which houses the plate grips well to your wetsuit to prevent lift; the same material is used for the lower half around the front of your waist. A small Dyneema loop is sewn into the base of the external carbon plate for potentially leashing to.

The second key ingredient to the system is a single-piece chest plate, which is another flexible carbon with neoprene inner and comes in various sizes for different body shapes. It has a white line to indicate the center of the plate, to make it as easy as possible to line up with the high-end dive suit style zip, which runs up the front. This Velcros internally to the inside of the waistcoat and has plenty of room for adjustment up and down. Once you have the position settled, you can leave this attached to the waistcoat for quick and simple entry and exit.

Part three is the harness hook and back strap system. This slips under another piece of carbon which sits vertically on the rear of the jacket and Velcros firmly in place with plenty of adjustment up and down available to allow you to set your perfect hook height. The wing of the back strap then Velcros onto the front of the harness around your pectorals to firmly locate the spreader. Again once this is all in place it can all be left as one unit. The spreader bar is a low profile, tough 3D-printed hook sat on another flexible carbon plate. The wings on the back of the plate slide back into a sleeve under your arms and then lock in place with an adjustable buckle system. One side is a hook, and one side is an ingenious magnetic self-locating buckle which really eases entry and exit. Don't be tempted to crank this too tight like a kite harness, there's no need. Breathe out to expand your chest and take up any slack in the webbing. Under the spreader bar is a PU leash point and the optional leash is a stealthy looking piece of high quality Dyneema with some shock cord run inside. A carabiner sits on the end which is well covered with neoprene.

At the wing end, Wingman provide various lengths of center handles to attach their bespoke mono-harness line to. This simple square profiled strap locates the mono line at a perfect 90 degrees to the strut, and tightens with a steel buckle. We tested across a range of wings from various brands with soft webbing as well as hard handles and nothing proved a challenge to fit the handles to. This means you can locate the mono loop in exactly the correct position to balance the wing with and it makes the 3D printed hook small and easy to hook in and out of.

Wearing the full combo, everything feels slimline compared to a standard impact vest, and the hook feels like it's been grafted to your

ION GEARBAG TEC

Nothing signals the easement of a global pandemic like a fresh range of board bags from ION. Foiling sports necessitate a fresh look at travel bags to safely transport your gear to your hard-won holiday destination and neatly negotiate the airline baggage policy with a minimum of fuss. ION have had their thinking caps on to get a range of sizes to practically accommodate all these strange-shaped boards we're now insisting on riding.

First of all, let's talk environmental impact. The majority of the bag's material is 100% recycled PU-coated nylon, and ION have a carbon offsetting scheme with a hydro power plant in Sri Lanka. This should help you feel marginally less guilty about getting on that plane in the first place.

On the top, two large TPU patches with vents sit at either end of the bag to allow some airflow, so if you've left in a bit of a hurry without drying things, it should moderate the amount of festering gear potential on a long plane ride back from the tropics. A small pocket sits in the end of the bag which can house an address card, and is perfect for storing away your foil fixings, so they don't distribute themselves too liberally during the flight. There's a small separate compartment sewn into the lid internally which is ideal for stowing footstraps.

The end handles clip on and off to allow you to potentially clock them on to a roof rack, or tag onto another bag; there's some helpful D rings provided on the corners here as well. In the center of the bag some gray seatbelt grade webbing forms the main carry straps and can be slung over your shoulder if necessary for winching it onto the luggage carousel with steeze.

Wheels are an essential for any travel bag that might harbor more than 25kg, and ION haven't scrimped in this department with two larger bearing-spun wheels any inline skater would be pleased with. It glides along effortlessly, taking rough airport tarmac well, and will hop down a curb with ease.

The Curve plate and wheels sit at one end, making this end rigid so aim more delicate items here, and the opposing end has a rugged scuff cover with the center of the bag soft. Bear in mind that your board will essentially form the longitudinal structure or spine of the bag, so make sure it fits well to avoid any sag in the middle. This is clearly to save weight and as a bonus the bag rolls up from one end to make it very compact to store when not in use.

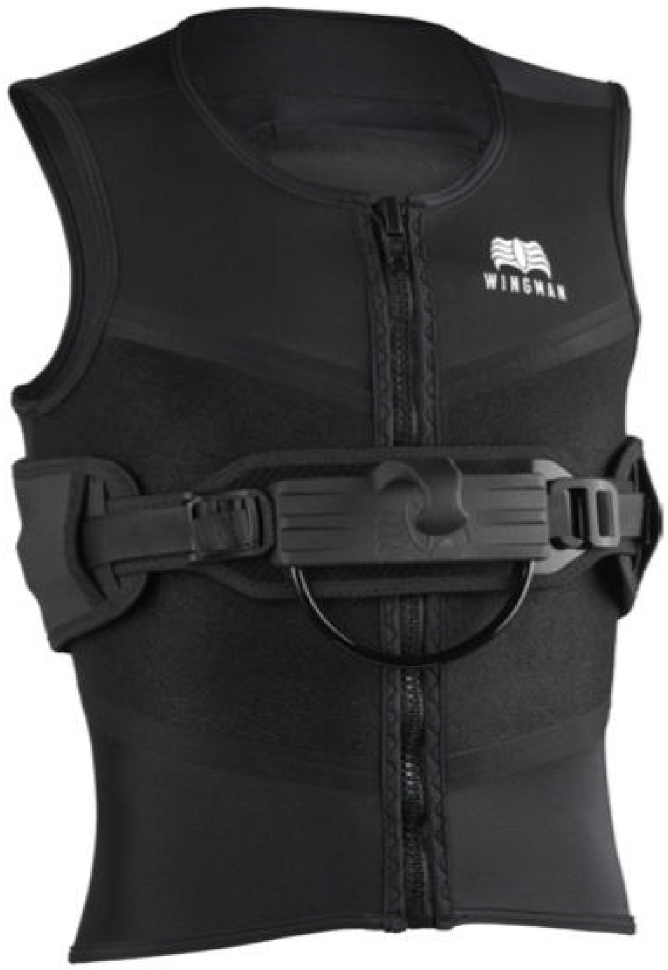
A top loading zip opens a huge aperture enabling easy access to shuffle things around to confuse the check-in staff if you're perhaps a little over your allowance. The zips are chunky, and slide well with large zip loop pullers, so very easy to operate. The ION Gearbag TEC is an extremely well thought out and detailed bag system that's going to make your traveling as easy as possible. It's a wingfoiler's best companion. **RB** chest. It's also light weight at 1.47kg wet on our scales. The close fitting and minimal nature means there's very little interference or restriction on your body movement. Carbon plates at the front and rear spread the load of the hook very evenly across your shoulders making it extremely comfortable even when very overpowered.

As more of a freeride and wave-focused rider, traditionally I've been best described as harness resistant; whilst I could see the application in certain circumstances for my riding I enjoyed the simplicity of not having an accessory. After testing various systems, the Wingman vest has finally changed that.

The penny really dropped for me on an overpowered session at a Cornish point break with strong downwind current. In forty knots with hail storms, clawing my way upwind was made immeasurably less stressful by hooking in. The harness loop attached to the 3.5m wing didn't hamper its flagging ability and at no point was it annoying. The lack of fatigue also extended my session beyond that of others, who understandably spent most of the session clinging on for dear life. For a wintery session like this, the vest definitely provides some extra insulation, particularly on your back. Its crossover into wingfoil racing is obvious for reduced fatigue, better posture and enhanced upwind ability, and perhaps what initially pushed the design direction. The other delightful bonus was that because the load of the wing wasn't all through my fingers, it didn't stop the blood flow to them in the ultra-cold UK January conditions, so they didn't go numb.

Hooking in aside, the level of impact protection both front and back that the vest provides is impressive; the modularity in the system means the harness hook and Velcro wings are easily removable from the system, leaving you with a very slimline carbon shelled impact vest, ideal in bigger wave conditions and any other scenario where you don't necessarily need to hook in.

Occasionally in the genesis of a sport, something truly innovative comes along and the Wingman harness system is it. Its ergonomic and functional hook position, slimline and effective impact protection and minimalistic form should tempt over even the most harness-resistant wingers. Such is the level of stealth most people didn't even notice I was wearing a harness. **RB**



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FLITEBOARD SERIES 3

I recently headed up to Fliteboard HQ at Byron Bay to test out their newest Series 3 range of electric hydrofoils. Catching up for coffee and sharing a few waves with Flite founder, David Trewern, I was able to get an insight into an incredible company culture focused on user experience and constant design progression.

We tested the Fliteboard Pro and Ultra L boards with Flitecell Sport and Nano batteries, and flew the Cruiser 1100 and Cruiser Jet 1500 wings underneath it all. Conditions were a dreamy 2-3ft, with unbroken right handers peeling down The Pass. Local Flite-shredder Adam Bennetts even came out to show me the ropes on how to rip these wings hard!

Starting off with the Fliteboard Pro with Sport Battery on the Cruiser 1100 wing, this setup weighs in at 29.8kg, and is a beautiful beginner's choice, with enough juice for 1.5 hours ride time and a very easy slow lift off that makes learning a breeze. With great ride stability and predictable pitch control, it can still go up to around 27km/hr and carve really nice S-turns through waves.

Switching to the Cruiser Jet 1500 wing, designed to work with the Flite Jet (which swaps out the existing TrueGlide prop on the Flite mast) this wing felt so smooth and buttery to ride. Jet propulsion has a slightly different feel to the conventional prop – it operates better at high speed, but doesn't have as much low-down grunt to get going. This is why the Cruiser Jet 1500 has a little more surface area, to help with takeoff. Once up, this wing and propulsion combo are so, so smooth, with minimal motor noise and less turbulence through turns, also reacting better when accidentally releasing the stabilizer out of the water. With a slightly higher aspect ratio than the Cruiser series, it has a lot of glide yet can turn surprisingly hard and sharp. When riding de-powered on waves, this wing and jet combo feels like it has really low drag, so for advanced riders, wave-riding can be prioritized and battery can be conserved, prolonging the session.

Weight is everything in foiling and e-foiling, contributing to responsiveness, agility, takeoff speed, not to mention carrying the board to the water's edge! Sacrificing ride-time for performance, on the Pro we swapped out the Flitecell Sport Battery with the company's newest Flitecell Nano, which weighs in at only 6.2kg. This caused a noticeable improvement in the ride quality, swing weight and carving ability during subsequent water testing, albeit with an understandable reduction in ride time (about 45 mins) due to the smaller battery size.

The Nano was designed with weight in mind, which brings me to the Fliteboard Ultra Carbon, another of Flite's newest weapons in board design. This is a performance setup, some might call it the Holy Grail of e-foil setups in 2023, designed for those individuals and advanced riders who go e-foiling to go big. Weighing in at only 22.5 kg together with the Nano, this is one of lightest setups out there, and I could feel this straight away when testing it for the first time. Turns were on another level, even on the same Cruiser and Cruiser Jet wings, and underfoot these boards are so nimble and responsive to the slightest input. Coming from a prone/SUP/downwind background, the Ultra Carbon even enabled me to feel the little bumps and bits of wave energy in the water below, which is not something you can usually feel when riding an e-foil. With its double concave hull design, this board also glances off the water really well and is very controlled through sharp turns. Progression in the sport may revolve around the Ultra Carbon this year, with some Flite rippers riding with attitude – popping airs, hitting breakneck speeds and absolutely sending it on bigger waves.

What most impressed me about the new Fliteboard range was the user experience and the nifty design ideas that David and the team have integrated into these products. The battery connects to the board via two cables, it's as simple as that. The unique mast design with its integrated (FliteBox) speed controller, ensures the electronics are cooled as the aluminum glides through the water, eliminating the need for cooling tubes. The hand controller is very simple to use and pair, and beginners can get used to the speed control sensitivity by holding the trigger fully depressed and cycling up through the gears, while advanced riders can transition to feathering the trigger for ultimate control. Even the custom-designed latches securing the battery lid to the board are satisfying to use. When looking at these boards, the build quality is unquestionable, and the twist-on dual-propulsion option with the Jet vs Prop combos is a game-changer for customisation.

Overall, the refinement of these products is impressive, and the Series 3 range does a good job at covering all bases, for all types of e-foilers. Through their great product design and innovation, Flite is a company that continues to achieve global success while staying true to its Byron Bay roots. **JK**

Fliteboard PRO (with footstraps)

Fliteboard ULTRA L

Flitecell Nano Battery

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UNIFOIL HYPER^2 170/210

In a hugely competitive and rapidly advancing foiling market, Unifoil has managed to continually step it up. As we ended 2022, their new Hyper^2 range of foils were unveiled, some hailing these as the next best thing in high performance, high aspect foil wing design, taking the best attributes of the original Hyper range but thinning out the profile and wing tips, focusing on more speed, more efficiency and accentuating that surfing feel we've always loved about the Uni products.

I can say after a couple of months testing the Hyper^2 170 (170in2/1097cm2) and Hyper^2 210 (210in2/1355cm2), I honestly did not want to give these wings back. When Paul Barnett, International Brand Manager for Unifoil, handed over this new gear for me to test, I have to say I was initially impressed by the sharp, cool-look of the product and all the packaging, including a really nifty tackle box of Uni-branded titanium hardware and tools to get flying. I also appreciated the provided Unifoil carry bag, which made it so easy to keep everything tidy, protected and removeable from the boot of my car.
In the bag was the new super-stiff (I had the 83cm) Katana mast. This thing is slick, with a nice carbon-black finish. It has slotted countersunk mast holes, into which went Uni's titanium wing nuts which allow for quick setup, pack-up and adjustments on-the-go... it all goes together and comes apart in just under a minute, easier than most other brands I've used. Mast-to-fuse connection is taper-locked, without even the slightest play, providing a really nice direct-feel to the foil while riding. Feeling efficient and streamlined, this mast gave me absolute confidence and did not feel draggy.

I'm an 80kg rider, using an 85L x 21" wide SUP for SUP foil/wingfoil/downwinding. With both wings I used the Uni Shunt 13" tail wing. I'd recommend the Hyper^2 210 (span of 985cm; AR of 7.3) for those lighter days. It's got a really low stall speed, is super easy to get going, and feels like the perfect harmony between a bigger wing with endless glide and a smaller, more rippable wing. And boy do these things rip. Getting the wingtips out of the water was not an issue, and when maxing out on a bomb-set, the foil still behaved predictably and was easy to get back in control for another carving turn. While riding the 210, I did a lot of light DW days and could always rely on it to paddle up and connect bumps. Speed range is a key attribute of this foil, making it very versatile and handy when conditions look marginal
.

Moving down to the Hyper^2 170 (span of 920cm; AR of 8) for those bigger days or stronger DW days, it quickly became my new favorite. When top-speed is everything in chasing the swells and handling those insane drops, this wing can handle it. With its smaller span and high AR, it is so rippable but still relatively easy to pump and glide once you get it dialed. You can pop this whole foil out of the water and dive back in without an issue, and traverse comfortably through foamy sections and turns.

Overall I would say that these wings are great for most forms of foiling: SUP, prone, winging and DW'ing. There is plenty of top speed to catch the swells but low enough stall-out speed to keep going slow or get going again if you come down. They are fun to turn and rip, and paired with the new Katana mast, the setup and overall feel is slick. **JK**

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hyper² 210
RACE

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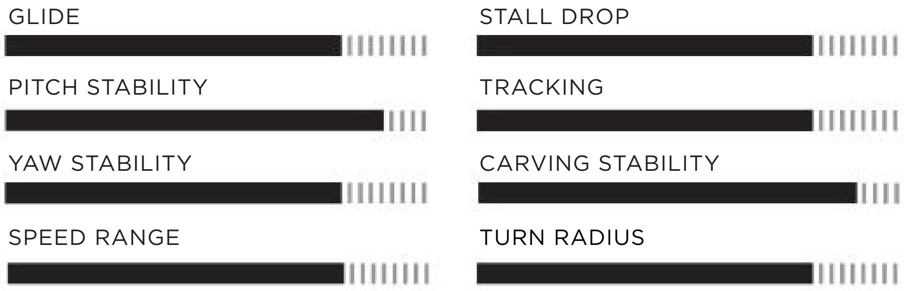
UNIFOIL HYPER^2 170/210



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INBOUND

SLINGSHOT PHANTASM E SERIES & G SERIES

Two fresh Phantasm foil line-ups recently appeared from the Slingshot stable, so – duly diligent as we are – we dropped Wing/Wind Brand Manager Wyatt Miller a few lines to gather all the intel about the new G-Series and E-Series…

PHOTOS **ERIC DURAN**

Hey team. So first up, can you give us an overview of both ranges, and what their optimum disciplines and environments are?

Both E and G Series front wings are multi-sport compatible, and they work great for prone, wing, wake and windsurf, though most are too big for most kitefoiling applications.

The E Series is all about making foiling easy and having great lower speed stability and easy gradual lift. They have a nice wide chord in the middle to get you up at low speed and then taper quickly towards the tips to stay agile and stable. The E Series wings come in three sizes from 1550-2200cm2. The smallest one, the E866 is my go-to for teaching lighter weight riders learning to wing, the largest E1090 is great for the heaviest riders in the lightest wind. Our wake crew almost all use the medium sized E990 as it is well matched for the slower speed of the wave and lets you carve and play comfortably several wakes back. For learning dock starting, that mid-sized E990 at 1800cm2 is the teams go-to.

The G Series is the mid-high aspect line that is all about maximizing pump and glide performance while being stable in the roll so they don't take a ton of concentration and ankle work to keep flying balanced and steady. They are all super dependable under foot and give you the confidence you need to carve hard. The aspect ratio is a tad lower on the smaller wings which keeps the wingspan down for great turning and acceleration while not sacrificing the low-end get up and go. The larger wings have a slightly higher aspect-ratio to maximize glide, even on small wind swell.

The E-Series is the newest addition to the Phantasm line-up. What spurred the demand here?

While most of us industry folks have been foiling for years, we have to admit that foiling was a bit intimidating at first. There are currently a ton of people excited to jump into foil sports with no foil (or even boardsport) experience at all. We wanted to design a wing that would lead to that "eureka" foiling moment as quickly as possible. With a wide chord in the middle for smooth, even lift at low speeds and then quickly tapered wing tips that were easy to control with downturned ends for safety, these wings not only lead to early success but they can cruise at the low speeds demanded by our wake team playing four wakes back.

And how did you decide on your sizing for the E-Series?

Great question! This leads me to a good point that does not get discussed enough, which is that really big wings are not helpful for lightweight people who are learning. If you are under 150lbs you will have a hard time controlling a 2000+cm2 wing at the early stages. We find that lighter weight riders benefit most from a wing around 1500cm2, like the E-866. On the other hand, 220lb guys learning in light wind will definitely have an easier time on a big old wing like the 2200cm2 E1090, and seasoned vets will be able to get up and going in next to nothing. Weight matters, and with the E-Series we wanted to make sure we could deliver that "eureka" moment to every weight class.

Which of your stabilizers pair best with the E-Series?

We really based all of our front wings designs to be best paired with our standard PS400 Stabilizer. We have a few more stabilizers coming down the pipe but for now the smaller PS325 is really for more advanced riders or people kite foiling where you go straight from zero to full speed as soon as you get up.

The G-Series has been out for a few months now. How has the feedback been?

We based the whole G-Series line off our PTM926 from last year. The PTM926 quickly got the reputation as "The Hero Maker" because it was so easy to use and delivered that effortless stable glide that most foilers were looking for. The PTM926 instantly made the sport of winging twice as fun for our test team, myself included. All of a sudden, I was laughing at how consistently I could pump back out to the next wave while prone foiling. The wing just did everything we wanted and was so stable and not fidgety under foot. You could use that wing in all conditions and always came back smiling, so we made a whole line of them.

Are there a lot of iterations before you settle on the final product?

Ha! Yeah, there definitely are. We have a pretty good system at Slingshot for validating products. We have digital score cards for people to fill out that we can text to anyone who tries a product and then they just fill it out on their phone or computer. The products go to our alpha testers first, then if they test well enough we have to get a lot of beta testers to validify the product before we go to market. But getting all this testing done requires more than just a one-off prototype. Luckily, we can cut cheaper aluminum molds first that are good to produce about 20 wings max. Then when a front wing is fully checked off, we make steel molds that can pump out thousands of wings.

Who's the lead designer for your foil range currently?

Slingshot Co-Founder Tony Logosz has been leading the charge on foil design since we started. But we have a couple of young CAD engineers who are currently giving him a run for his money. We are seeing an interesting collaboration between art and science now. All the computer fluid testing models are pretty wild to play with.

Where's most of the testing being done for you guys at the moment, I guess you can get pretty much all conditions that you need in Hood River, right?!

Lots of testing goes down in Hood River during the summer. Our new offices are right at the waterfront. You can literally walk across the street and go for a test session and then hit the showers in the new offices afterwards. It is pretty cool. Everyone has a great view of the river. Then in the winter we test everything in La Ventana, Baja California Sur, Mexico. Our foil guru, Fred Hope, grew up here and I have a wing/windsurf resort here too. Pretty much the whole staff comes down at some point in the winter and our head tester Brandon Scheid does a lot of trips back and forth, muling gear. Then we also have Ben Wilson running the Fijian resort island of Namotu and testing all the new gear with his guests. The testing really never stops.

FLITEBOARD ULTRA L AND FLITE JET

If you've already read our Backstory slot this issue, you'll be aware that Fliteboard just dropped a whole new load of fun with their Series 3 release. Fliteboard founder David Trewern filled us on some particularly exciting aspects of that release…

Morning David. First up, we're gonna assume the L stands for Light on the new ULTRA L Fliteboard… are we right?!

"L" stands for Life Changing… only kidding, yes it means Light.

Can you tell us what weight you've achieved, and how you've managed to get to that point?

ULTRA L weighs just 22.5kg/49.6 lbs, and that's for the complete setup. In the pursuit of ultimate performance, we stripped back the footstraps and handles, as well as lightening the battery box by handcrafting it with carbon fiber. We didn't just reduce the weight, but also the swing weight. By positioning the battery weight as close as possible to the mast, the improved dynamics make your Fliteboard even more responsive and maneuverable. This is a performance machine created for experienced water sports enthusiasts, with high design in mind.

How much better does all that weight loss feel in waves?

It feels so agile and responsive it's incredible. Feedback from those who've tried it, is that it's the closest you can get to classic/prone foiling. ULTRA L comes standard with our new longer 80cm/31.5" mast which is perfect for taking on bigger waves, deeper turns, and smooth riding over choppy waters.

The ULTRA L comes in a pretty bling new colorway, with both the board and mast a very attractive muted gold. What was the thinking behind this?

The new range of board colors was inspired by the dreamy locations where customers go Fliteboarding. ULTRA L is available in metallic gold, inspired by golden sunsets in Ibiza, whilst AIR is offered in matte coral reminiscent of breezy days in Miami.

You've also released the new Flitecell Nano battery to work with the ULTRA L. What are we looking at in terms of time on the water with the Nano, and how does it compare with the other batteries in the range?

Flitecell Nano is the lightest lithium-ion eFoil battery, weighing only 6.2kg/14 lbs. It can give you a solid 45 minutes of foiling time but you can enjoy much longer sessions when riding waves. On the other end of the scale, we have the Explore battery which can last for up to 2.5 hours and is great for longer missions, or teaching friends/family. It weighs 14.5kg/32 lbs. In between we have the Flitecell Sport, a great all-rounder. At 10.6kg/23.4 lbs, it gives foil times of up to 1.5 hours. Ride time on an eFoil is actually quite nuanced, as you need to take into account various factors such as the propulsion system, wing choice, rider weight and ability. We've now developed a Ride Calculator on our website that provides the most accurate information based on your setup.

Does the Flitecell Nano work across the Fliteboard range?

All our batteries work across the whole range and with the previous Fliteboard series too. We've created a great ecosystem with modularity and interchangeability being key, as most riders like choice. We've also had a strong emphasis on safety – the entire range of Flitecell batteries is made with phase change material for thermal management, and premium high-discharge and low-temperature cells.

Onto another pretty exciting new development... the Flite Jet. Tell us about that, and the major differences between the jet and the original prop.

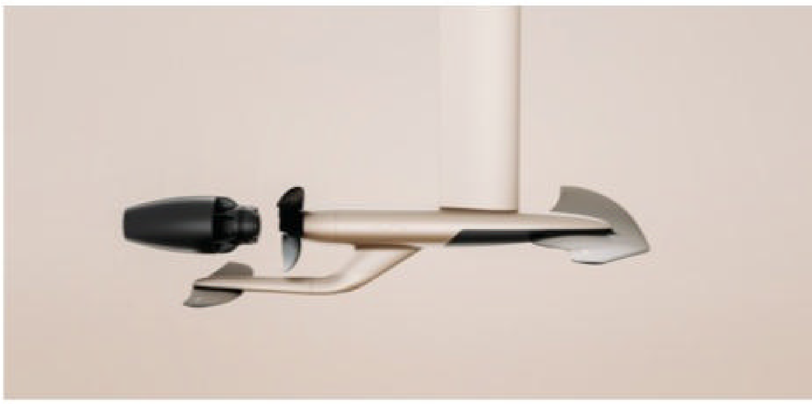
Flite Jet is the world's smallest and lowest drag eFoil jet. Made to be beautifully simple and engineered with precision, Flite Jet offers unparalleled smoothness and safety for riders. As eFoiling evolves, riders want different types of experiences, so Fliteboard now offers a choice of propeller or jet power. For the majority of users, our classic Flite Propeller (with or without the Prop Guard) will be the best choice, offering versatility and efficiency for a variety of riders in a range of conditions. True Glide is a free spinning propeller, designed for minimum drag when catching waves and riding swell. Using only the power of the ocean, you can release the trigger to glide. The transition between powered and unpowered is unbelievably smooth. This is the best choice for experienced riders looking for max range to weight ratio.

Are they interchangeable?

Yes, our Dual Drive system means that riders can choose their preferred propulsion option or seamlessly swap between prop and jet. The unique Dual Drive allows users to experience the best of both worlds in a matter of seconds, with no tools required.

What was the biggest technical challenge implementing a jet drive into your existing system?

We wanted to offer both propeller and jet for different situations and customer preferences. Propeller and jet systems require vastly different operating RPM and torque. Therefore, making one eFoil system that could support both propulsion systems was the biggest technical challenge. Fortunately, our reduction gearbox provided part of the solution here, allowing us to use the one motor for both applications.



You've also recently dropped the new Cruiser Jet range of wings as part of the Series 3 line up. Tell us about these...

As part of the Series 3 launch, we've developed two new Cruiser Jet wings that are perfectly paired with Flite Jet to unlock new possibilities for riders of all skill levels. A flatter rondure with only a small amount of anhedral and a lower aspect ratio than previous designs complement the wings' larger size to produce a very comfortable level of responsiveness/maneuverability. The larger area and a new section optimization process have resulted in these wings taking their place as the most efficient wings in our lineup. The performance unlocked by this increase in glide ratio means these wings are actually really great for unpowered surfing as well. There is even the capability now to connect waves by pumping without power. The Cruiser Jet 300 stabilizer pairs nicely with these wings to produce a more pitch-damped ride without the typical added drag of a larger stabilizer, and without the added yaw stability from winglets.

FREEDOM FOIL BOARDS WCFC FREQUENT FLYER & JATO

WCFC
WEST COAST FOIL CLUB

Following on from our feature about FFB's revival of the WCFC a couple issues back, we now have two new boards in the rack, the Frequent Flyer and the JATO, both part of the West Coast Foil Club range, a nod to the WCFC crew and their unquestionable influence on the scene before it was a scene… We spoke with Freedom's founder Chris Sayer to find out what promise sits in these two new shapes.

Hey Chris. So firstly, give us an overview of the two boards, and how much influence into these shapes is there from the original boards ridden by the Hurley Brothers, the founders of the West Coast Foil Club?

The WCFC JATO and Frequent flyer boards are almost the exact design from their original models that came out over three years ago. Jeff and Ryan were way ahead of their time in their board designs. As surfers, they just knew what they wanted out of a foil board and the all-important 'why' questions. Their priority was a board that was light, rigid and lasted, which is really all you can ask for in a foil board. We came in and added our twist in the construction and build of their original boards, along with some slight adjustments in their board files but essentially, they are the same boards from years back. People loved their boards back in the day. If it's not broken, why change anything?

Solid logic that. So did the brothers themselves have any influence into the range?

Jeff and I discussed the sizes of the boards a bit. To be honest I think they would have liked a bit smaller, for production purposes we went with a range of boards that is appealing to a wider target audience. Jeff and especially Ryan were riding boards back in the day that would be considered tow boards by most people because they were so tiny!

JATO stands for Jet Assisted Take Off. We're gonna assume the JATO is a speedy little thing?

The JATO name came from Ryan Hurley. He's got a ton of creativity when it comes to marketing. He was behind a lot of the WCFC Instagram posts and the classic foil memes they would share. If you look through any of their early IG posts, you can see they were all over the map, towing into world class waves behind their Yamaha Wave Runner. I remember early on picking up one of their original tow boards and being blown away by how small it was. The JATO is their interpretation and twist on a tow foil board. I would call it more of a pure surf tow board rather than a wake tow board as it has an outline that lends itself to surfing more than sticking airs and flipping behind a wake. At 1.75" thick and 16 liters, the board is super responsive to the foil under your feet and really reflects Jeff and Ryan's philosophy and direction they see in the purist form of foiling, which is tapping into the energy of swells rather than all the flips and aerials that tends to generate a lot of attention now.

What are the benefits of having such a limited size board when up on tow?

The Hurley bros knew early on that the smaller the board, the more immediate and responsive it will be to your foil. Because they never were into strapping in to do flips and airs, they weren't concerned about the surface area needed to help stick big boosts. So going to a small board was all about having something ultra-responsive.

Which of your foil range does it best pair with?

The JATO pairs perfectly with our FFB Phoenix Wing. They are both designed for high-speed carves. Our Phoenix wing doesn't get as much attention as our Halcyon but it's an amazing wing for people looking to tow and whip into some waves. Everyone gets so into pumping now that a good carve wing gets lost in the shadows...

Tell us about the construction and layup across your board range.

When we go out to build a Freedom board, we are looking at the same characteristics that Jeff and Ryan were thinking... We want our boards to be light, rigid and to hold up to the modern demands of foiling. We want them to last! I would say the fourth criteria is that all our boards are built with an intention for a specific discipline of foiling as well. Whether it's a thicker deck pad for a wing board or a unique bottom lamination layup for prone boards that we want to be a little lighter, all our boards have a target weight and intentional design aspects that might favor one discipline of foiling versus another. We really dissect every aspect of a board and ask why it's there or just as importantly, why it's not there.

Who are the absolute ninjas out riding these two shapes?

I would have to say from our Freedom Team Kyle Maligro and Brady have really been loving the 4'2 Frequent Flyer. Kyle has been riding foil boards as long as Jeff and Ryan and he claims the 4'2 is one of the best boards he's ridden. From a design perspective, the Frequent Flyer boards have a really unique reverse deck rocker in the tail. So essentially the board has a slight drop in the deck towards the tail which affects your foil and the angle of attack when you're flying. It gives the board just a bit more front-footed pressure when in a neutral stance which in my opinion gives the board more of a surfy feel under your feet.

FFB
WEST COAST FOIL CLUB
WCFC

WCFC Frequent Flyer

FFB
WEST COAST FOIL CLUB
WCFC
J.A.T.O.

WCFC JATO

Are there going to be more boards to come in the WCFC range?

I hope so! It's super fun to be working with Jeff and Ryan. They are good people and are super smart when it comes to product design and marketing! At Freedom, we are always looking to work with people that have good insight and a passion for the sport of foiling.

Where does the bulk of the testing and product development take place? Let us in on your less secret spots!

We utilize all our team riders to prototype new designs so our boards and our protos are being flown all over the place. This is important because we want our boards to hold up in all different types of conditions. Hawaii for instance requires boards to hold up to the stronger and more powerful waves found there, and with its unique climate boards need to vent well to handle the warmth and humidity. We do have some nice secret spots to foil locally, but you have to be flying a Freedom board for me to share locations!

FRESH ARRIVALS

APPLETREE
APPLE SKIPPER

Fresh out of the Appletree orchard comes the Apple Skipper, a new cross-discipline concept from the brand that promises plenty of performance within each…

Hey team! First things first – can you give us an overview of the board, and for who and what it's primarily designed for?

Our new Apple Skipper is more than a model, it's a design concept that we are going to apply to a range of models. From a small board for kite and wake, a prone model, a wing model and finally a downwind version as well. All of which are tuned for the needs of these individual disciplines. In general the Apple Skipper range is aimed at the experienced rider. Riders that do not require a super efficient planing surface. Instead, the Apple Skipper is designed to perform the best in tight turns and hard carves and the occasional jump.

Talk to us about the "bulge"…

So the bulge might seem a bit strange at first. It's the bottom of the board that actually sits a bit lower than the foil box. We have always believed that a convex bottom, or hull type bottom works better for splitting the water and giving it a way to release.

In our experience this works better than having a concave or multiple concave's. The bulge under the front foot does exactly that, it gives the water a place to deflect, so when you hit the surface, you skip back up without sticking.

How should you choose your volume based on your bodyweight and ability?

We usually advise to start at the same volume as you would use in a normal surfing shortboard. It will be a familiar kind of float and paddle. If you want to catch small waves and your local break offers really weak surf, you could go 2-4 liters more. If you are more experienced you can go 2-4 liters less. The lower volume definitely helps with pumping and a small foil board is just very nice to ride, but it ain't fun if you're not catching anything, so don't go too small too quickly.

What sort of rider should buy the Apple Skipper prone instead of the Pro Foil Surf V2?

Definitely an experienced rider, who is looking for a new board, probably with a bit lower volume than their previous board. If you want to do foam bashes and tighter turns in the pocket, the bottom design and pulled in tail really helps with that.

Who's been out there putting the R&D hours in that's led to the Skipper we see before us?

We usually start riding new ideas ourselves close to our factory in Portugal. There is a really good foiling beach. As we have our own factory, we can quickly make prototypes and test them. Another advantage is that we can make boards in the final construction right away and we do not have to wait for third party producers to send us samples from Asia. So we go through a lot of prototypes before we include the team. Then the next step is that we offer the protos to our pro and ambassador team to test them in different conditions around the world. We then collect feedback and make changes before the final board is released. In total this takes anywhere from six months to well over a year.

We've got photos here of Dylan Wichmann – what's his feedback on the Skipper look like?

Dylan is a really great tester and an all round nice guy. He can really say what he likes and what he doesn't, but also explain why he likes it, or not. He said: "Being much thinner than the other models, the connection to the foil is much more direct. I really like the outline, being narrower and having a more pulled in tail allows you to turn that much harder, without having to worry about a wide tail catching on the water. I also really like the rocker in the nose, while keeping the rest of the board flat. This means you will still be standing parallel to your foil but be less likely to have the nose catch on the water when touching down. I think all surf foil boards will start to look more and more like this model."

You've got quite a wide range of boards now. What's your most popular discipline/range now?

Winging really exploded in the last two years, so that is now our number one discipline. Surf foiling continues to grow as well but that is more specialized and winging does attract a wider group of people. The new downwind discipline is very interesting as well, evolving extremely fast at the moment. As we've said, the Apple Skipper will also be available as a downwind board, later this spring. That model is now being tested by the team and we are collecting feedback to put in the final model. You might see some sneak peeks online in the coming weeks.

So is the move to the new factory done?!

YES! The move is completed and we are fully operational! It's amazing to finally have all the space we need/want. We were just joking how on earth we would have done 7'7 downwind boards in the old factory. The new place is also super nice and clean. When you enter, you would never say it's a surfboard factory. It was quite a stressful move, while keeping production numbers up, but very glad we made the choice to do it. And props to our entire workforce for all the hours they put in the project!

APPLETREE
APPLETREE
APPLETREE

CABRINHA MANTIS V3, MANTIS APEX & VISION WINGS

An upgraded Mantis, as well as a new and lighter version in the Mantis Apex, plus the brand-new Vision wing form part of Cabrinha's huge 03 collection drop recently. It's worth heading to their website to see the rest of the inventory, it's impressive… but we got in touch with Brodie Sutherland, Cabrinha's wing and foil designer, to talk wings and wings alone…

We're now up to the third version of the Mantis wing. How has the Mantis evolved for this season's model?

This year we wanted to make some incremental improvements to the Mantis without losing the power and stiffness it is known for. We have refined the flow of the LE diameter, optimized the wing twist for each size for the best power delivery, and refined the strut shape for better ergonomics. Most notably the wing comes with the new rigid handle that come standard on all Cabrinha wings, with an included shim set that allows you to customize the handle to the way you ride, by changing the height and angle of the handles.

The panel layout on the Mantis looks like it's had a good overhaul, explain the design direction for us.

We have rethought the panel layout for a more rigid and even canopy. By orienting the panels along the load paths of the wing the canopy can hold its shape better and have better response when riding. This also means your wing will perform at its intended performance over a longer period of time, due to added stability of these strategically placed seams.

Tell us about your new Ultra-HP material, were there any design challenges implementing the new cloth into the Mantis Apex series?

The Ultra-HP material is an all-new fabric this year. It is a Dyneema based material that is extremely strong, light and has great stitch holding capabilities. This has allowed us to reduce the diameters of the LE and increase the pressures resulting in a very light, low drag frame. We have been developing this wing for almost two years now as the material behaves very different than traditional Dacron. The result is a wing that is faster and more efficient and floats effortlessly when flown off the front handle.

What are the main differences between the Mantis V3 and the Mantis Apex?

The key difference between the Mantis and Mantis Apex is the leading edge construction. The Apex uses Ultra HP material whereas the Mantis uses High Tenacity Dacron. The Apex is our highest performing wing product. The LE construction is different and they are each designed separately due to the specific properties the Ultra HP material adds.

You've also just released the new Vision model. Talk to us about what riders are going to enjoy the most with this one.

The Vision has been extremely well received so far. This is a higher dihedral wing, so it feels more compact to fly than the Mantis. It is very directionally stable and has a light feel in the hands. Anyone who finds themselves riding big wings often in lighter wind and wants a wing that feels more nimble will love this wing. If you're someone who rides smaller sizes and wants a wing that is well balanced and predictable, this wing is for you as well.

How should the rider decide whether to buy Mantis or Vision?

It really comes down to how you like your wing to feel. The Mantis is a wing that is extremely rigid. It allows you to generate lots of power pumping the wing, drives upwind hard and drifts like a feather. The Vision has more sheet in and go power, is well balanced in the hands, and is extremely intuitive to fly. I recommend visiting your local shop or a demo and get out and try both. You won't be disappointed with either.

You've made the Vision up to 8m, how difficult is it to develop the larger wings compared to a mid-size 5m for example?

The big wings behave different than the smaller sizes. You have to vary the aspect ratio of the wing to keep the span in a reasonable range. You also have to think about the taper of the LE and twist of the wing to control all that canopy. Big wings have more of a tendency to backwind when overpowered if designed wrong, so we have really focused on this aspect as well. We have had riders use the 8m in up to 30 knots without issue. Lots of time has gone into the development of the large size wings this year.

Tell us about the new handles and how it affects the wing's feeling in the hands.

The new handle design is based off all our experience designing kite control systems over the years. We have used a thin EVA grip and a stiff but soft touch bar end to give you the most direct control of your wing and reduce fatigue. The bar ends are also ergonomically shaped so they can be used as a handle as well. The handle is your point of contact with the wing so it's important that it's solid and predictable to give you the most precise control and response.

How hard is it to fuse a rigid handle system into an inflatable structure? What considerations do you have to make for manufacturing?

It's very important to think about how the wing will flex and move around the handle. We have spent a lot of time testing and making sure we have put enough reinforcement around the connection points, to distribute the forces, so we have a durable product that will last.

Which of the team has been helping out during the development process?

The development of all Cabrinha products is done within the Cab Design works group and is a group effort, from initial idea to presenting it to the public. From targets and challenges that are identified in the market, the design, testing, production optimization, quality procedures and control, the process relies on input from many stakeholders. In the core design phase, we utilize our team of extraordinary athletes actively. Keahi is always a super helpful and key resource. We spend time on the water testing and refining the wings on Maui and Oahu. Andrea is our young freestyle ripper on Maui. He is always great at putting gear through its paces and making sure we have a strong and durable product.
Joey Pasquali is our race extraordinaire from San Francisco. He comes from a sailboat and kite racing background and is a great guy to discuss ideas or have him line up a prototype with some of the fastest guys in the world. We are also lucky that our entire Cabrinha staff is full of avid wingers and foilers, and happy to help out with feedback whenever possible.

CABRINHA
MANTIS 4
CABRINHA

UNIFOIL PROGRESSION

A man who needs little introduction if you're suitably immersed in the sport, Erik Antonson is the host of (and the brains behind) The Progression Project podcast. His recent collaboration with Unifoil sees the arrival of the new 'Progression' foil range. We dropped Erik some question to find out more…

Hey Erik, so tell us how you first got involved with the team at Unifoil…

I've always been a huge fan of Unifoil. It was the Hyper 190 that really set in foil brain for me. I couldn't believe how much ride time you could get in a session of terrible waves. A few months later Cliffy came on the podcast. After the show we stayed in contact, pinging ideas and tuning thoughts off each other. When he came on last year, after the Vyper came out, I was joking on the show and said I'd love to help design a foil with him. He said he was into it, and I had the recording so he couldn't back out… and that started the project.

Tell us about your home conditions in Florida?

We live in Jax Beach, which is North Florida. There's an amazing foil crew here. Mike Pedigo, Brian Finch, Austin Tovey and a ton of other rippers. It's become a hotbed for foiling because of the epic foil conditions. Let's take this week for example, a pretty normal week for us. We've had a small, 2ft, 11 second swell in the water all week. Monday, proned the local sandbars. Tuesday, towed an inlet. Wednesday, proned. Today, towed, and tomorrow a hard north wind comes through and the downwind will be on at the beginning of the swell and then the winging will be epic over the weekend. It's a terrible area for good surf from a surfing perspective, but it's incredible from a foil standpoint. Knee to chest high consistently and then bigger swells with storms or hurricanes.

Did you start with an existing model from the Uni range as an influence, or was it a ground up, fresh design?

It was ground up, but we did some early foil section testing on designs we knew worked to limit variables.

What's the Progression's USP, and who's going to love it?

That's a wide range of folks. We were lucky enough to get some of the pre-release foils here in Jax, my thought was I wanted a few of the guys I foil with every day on them so I could see how they really go in the wild. Unifoil agreed, they've been so supportive of my ideas during the project, and I've been able to watch five guys ride them, from beginner to world class. I think what drew all of us to foiling is that feeling of an infinite playground. I had that at the beginning. Then I started chasing performance and riding smaller, faster foils, and maybe I was doing some better turns at times, but I wasn't as stoked as I was the year before. But once you feel that performance you don't want to go back. That's why the design started with glide and pitch. Glide gives you more time on foil for less cardio and stability in pitch means you can push the foil harder. The trick was loosening it up once we found the section, but we were able to do it. That's a long way to answer the question, but most folks who get to try it are frothing! From guys in Australia to Hawaii, prone surf to downwind. And on the wing the glide just gives you more time to complete your tacks or gybes... it just makes it easier. More than a few folks have called or DM'd me to say they just did their first tack on the 170. It might be easier to say who it's not for... that's going to be folks chasing the top 1% of speed or performance. If you're comfortable at 95% performance and being on foil way longer, you'll probably love it. I towed on the 170 today and I'm going to downwind it tomorrow.

How difficult was the foil design process, what was the aspect that most surprised you?

The process was a blast for the most part. It was like Christmas every few weeks. Protos were always in the mail. And since we independently designated and tested all the sizes, that was a lot of foils. The only times it became difficult, and I'm not sure that's the word, I guess it was more like it felt like work, was when there was a deadline and the waves were good and I had to test sizes or tails that weren't optimal for conditions. Testing and foiling are different things. Dave Kalama and I just discussed that on a recent podcast.

As far as what surprised me the most, it was when we had the first real 170 proto and I kicked out of a wave and it just kept going. You have a sense of when you need to pump on exit, that feel of speed, but it just seemed like it took so long to get there. I tested it that day by having my wife lap me up to the pier, about 1.5 miles, and I did six single chips back to the house with different tails and shims, feeling it out. I did that again when the 140 came. There's no better way to test a foil.

Were there any major stumbling blocks along the way?

The tail has been the most difficult for me. I wouldn't say it's a stumbling block, but since tails are about tuning and feel for the session, it's so hard to commit.

Yeah, the front wing is only half the story. How significant was it developing a tail to match the front wing?

I'll approach this question in a different way. I look at tails like I look at fins on a surfboard. My favorite surfboard is a 6'6 mid length that I ride as a thruster, a twin, a 2 +1 and even a single fin sometimes. I think that's why I love it so much; you can change it for your mood, conditions and the lines you want to draw. I see tails the same way. That's one of my favorite things about Unifoil is that they set the standard for the tail and there's a massive selection out there. I ride the Progression with about five different tails right now depending on the conditions and what I want to do. Like today I towed with the OG Unifoil race tail chopped to 13. It slowed the roll a bit but the glide was absolutely insane. I'll probably downwind that tail tomorrow. Gear teaches us and the tail is the cheapest and easiest thing to experiment with to add some new feels into your quiver.

uni
unifoil

PROGRESSION 140

PROGRESSION 170

What's the key advice you would give anyone thinking of designing their own foil?

Work with Cliffy! That guy is a genius at this stuff. It's one of those things where the more you learn the more you realize you're just scratching the surface. But one of my guiding principles in life is to just dive in head first. Learn through the mistakes. So just do it. Look at what's out there and think about how you can improve it or tweak it to make it fit the way you want to foil. And then buy good carbon!

SROKA POCKET BOARD & HA 1350 LIFT

A new board and a new foil wing from SROKA gave us a reason to drop in on and catch up with Bruno Sroka, CEO and adventurer-in-chief, to find out a little more about their new products...

Hey Bruno! Please give our readers an overview of the new Pocket board and the new high aspect 1350 Lift foil – which disciplines are they optimized for, and what kind of rider?

The Pocket is a 4-in-1 board: four sports on one board, including dock-start, wake foil, tow-in surf foil and kitefoil. Its small size, stiffness and lightness give it exceptional precision, which makes it a formidable board for pumping and carving. You will be able to pump for long distances in the best conditions. The ultra-rigid construction makes the board feel like one with the foil and gives it an extraordinary responsiveness. The whole thing reacts exactly as you would expect it to, and it's just great fun! It is built with a PVC fiberglass sandwich on the deck and hull to obtain the best strength to weight ratio. An ultra-dense Airex block runs through the board at the US rails to withstand high pressures.

The Sfoil with the 1350 HA Lift front wing will make you glide endlessly downwind and reconnect small swell trains with ease when surf, wake or wing foiling in all small conditions. It'll make you rediscover your usual spots, and choppy water will be your new playground!

Very easy to launch, the HA 1350 L does not come down once in flight. A simple pump stroke, an inconsistent swell or a small gust of wind is enough to prolong the pleasure of gliding indefinitely. Everything has been done to offer you a magical, infinite glide, with the minimum of effort.

How did you settle on the dimensions of the board, what's the thought process here?

The dimensions have been optimized to have one board for all activities. It's the perfect compromise between length, width and volume so you don't have to worry about size. Having only one board to simplify the quantity of material so you don't have to think about the choice of material! We notice that many riders spend too much time on the beach trying to choose the equipment. The goal is to spend as much time as possible in the water.

The pads extend over the whole board – what benefits does this provide?

In effect, the pads cover the entire deck of the board. This has two major advantages. It protects the board from possible shocks, and it allows you to consider strapless riding, whatever the activity. The weight gain if you reduce only a part of the pad would be minimal. To be one with the board is fundamental to us. This striped EVA pad really allows the feet to stick to the board.

55 strap inserts is certainly comprehensive, tell us the thinking behind this, and how they are engineered into the board...

Depending on the discipline, the feet are not positioned in the same place. For example, in wake foiling, the rear foot is slightly off the windward side. Therefore, on the rear foot there are three parallel insert bars. At the front, the straps can be used in a V-shape or in a central version in the axis or slightly shifted. These different options are suitable for all sports and all sizes and levels. A 4X4 board should be able to meet all needs.

The new HA 1350 Lift sounds dreamy for glide. What can you tell us about it?

With an aspect ratio of 9.0, this 1350 has a wingspan of 110cm. The glide ratio is partly due to the wingspan. So optimizing the wingspan for gliding really allows you to fly and stay airborne in minimal conditions, even if the wind drops or the swell is ridiculously small. This wing is perfectly suited for inshore wing riding where the wind is very, very gusty but also for surf foil or wake foil riding where the waves are very small. In downwind, with 15 knots of wind, it is very possible to downwind on it.

Where's your primary R&D been happening for all the gear?

We test the products mainly in Brittany and the Canary Islands. This allows us to vary the conditions and to adapt to a variety of conditions that our customers may encounter. We would like to test at more spots around the world though, and we are looking for ambassadors from all over the globe to help us get feedback.

What else can we expect from Sroka in 2023?

Well, at the end of last year we released the 950 HA Speed wing, which brings incredible performance and ultimate glide but in average conditions. This year we will be releasing a whole range of surf foils (4'2, 4'6 and 4'8), a new range of wing foil boards (the Sky rider 5'4, 5'7, 6'0 and 6'3) and most importantly a range of carbon foils built exclusively from high modulus carbon. So there's a lot of new stuff coming this year, and we've been working and testing it hard for months this fall and winter.

Also this year we are redesigning the Classic 1500, the Classic 1250 and we are coming up with a new 950 which will be more carving oriented. The objective of these three new models is to optimize the glide while having a maximum of control in the longitudinal to bring control and stability even at high speed.

FRESH ARRIVALS

OZONE APEX V1 MA RANGE

WASP
3.6
ozone

There's a whole new mid-aspect foil range from Ozone, and to fill us in on the details we put the questions to Ozone's Foil and Board Designer, Tibo dos Santos…

PHOTOS **ALVARO RODRIGUEZ**

Hey Tibo – firstly, give us an overview of the new range and who it's primarily pitched at…

Our new Apex V1 MA range runs from the MA800 to the MA1800. We wanted to create a foil range that carves and turns well, but is still super fun and accessible to ride, and this is what we've created with the fully modular Apex MA range. The medium aspect ratio and medium tapered planform provide an ideal balance between lift, glide and agility. The MA1800 and MA1500 are designed as light wind performance wings and are well suited for entry-level riders making their first runs foiling in light to moderate winds or heavy riders. The smaller sizes are the ultimate all-round front wing for most rider weights with an intermediate to advanced skill level.

How much R&D went into this range, and who was instrumental in this?

Well, I had already been designing a foil for myself when Ozone asked me to create one, which became the Apex V1. The design brief was to make something that performs well, is fun to ride, but easy and accessible. I had to design the product and then set up the production process. Following that there were plenty of days behind a computer running analysis, and then we had Torrin (Bright – Ozone's Product Manager and Tester) test them rigorously. And repeat, until we were completely happy with what we've just released.

You produce all your foils in house at your production facility in Vietnam, as you have with your kites for many years, right?

Yes. The idea was to rent out another building at the Parapex site originally, but instead we set up the whole foil production process within our kiteboard twin tip factory, which we now call our composite division. It's a superb and highly professional operation there. The team at Parapex are amazing.

Have you had to scale up, staff wise, and I guess you had to invest in some new machinery?

Yes of course, we designed and built our press so that it would exactly fit our needs. We also invested in additional CNC machines, and the factory reorganised the floor layup to integrate the foil production. I live in New Zealand, but now I can send the file to Vietnam and two weeks later I receive the foil. It also means we can send the same prototype to the rest of the test team wherever they are in the world and they can give their feedback.

How was the process of establishing the foil production facility?

It was quite an adventure. When Covid happened, I couldn't fly to the Parapex factory in Vietnam anymore. I didn't know if we'd be able to pull it off. I had to teach the guys in Vietnam how to mold a hydrofoil by video over Skype. I had four camping tables across my garden as I gave a tutorial on how to make a mast for a full carbon foil. It's really quite technical. There are so many layers. At the same time, I was working on the designs for the tooling and production process. That took 18 months, but the foils have turned out great. They're strong, you can jump high and they're fun to ride. The Parapex team are so good, setting and optimizing production is what they do best, and that's the main reason why we were able to manage to make it happen during that complex situation.

Tell us about your manufacturing process and layup, and what benefits does the Performance Surface Coating have?

All our foil parts are constructed with an optimum combination of high-density PVC or EPS foam cores and 100% carbon laminates for an incredible strength to weight ratio. All laminations are comprised of a quadraxial carbon fiber matrix with high modulus epoxy resin creating superior rigidity in flex and torsion. The Performance Surface Coating protects the foil from the UV and allows a perfect surface finish.

Tell us about the fixings and connection system and how you've whittled out flex at various junctures...

We use custom made titanium barrel bolts in the mast and fuselage which allow higher tightening torque than using classic insert or threading directly into an aluminum fuselage.

The mast tuttle recess in the fuselage is a unique design with a ridge linking both walls of the tuttle recess, making the connection really stiff and strong.

So you plan on extending the range?

Oh yes... for sure there is more to come!

800

950

1100

1250

1500

1800

FRESH ARRIVALS

TABOU TINY

Tabou just released the "Tiny" wing foil board into their board range, with three sizes, all optimized for radical wing action. We asked Tabou Board Designer Fabien Vollenweider for some insights…

Fabien, we love the name. Tiny but mighty?

It definitely is a mighty tool, if you know how to make use of it and the conditions are on. The Tiny is our high wind wing board made for those who've got the level to use a full sinker board. It's designed to go big, ride waves and jump in medium to strong wind conditions, plus it's a great option for pump foiling.

How do you select your sizing for the range?

In the end it's quite easy: choose a size that will easily sink with your weight. We have worked a lot on the volume distribution, allowing the board to sink flat combined with the weight of the foil. That is why the Tiny has a thick tail and super thin nose.

How difficult is it to design a board to cross over between prone and wing in this kind of literage?

It's been designed as a wing board, so our main focus was getting maximum performance for skilled riders in this category. But with its sizes, you can also use it as a prone board. Luckily many design characteristics help in both fields and I know that Kaden Pritchard uses it as a prone sometimes. It is tricky to design a board with just 26 liters that is still relatively easy to pump and start flying with. It sounds like having to combine two absolutely contrary demands – as little volume and board under the foot as possible on the one hand and early take-offs on the other hand. In the end, a lot of shaping and testing went into this and we're very happy with the result.

Who should be riding these little nuggets? And in what conditions?

Riders who pretty much only need the board as a platform to take-off and as connection with their foil will love the Tiny. On the one hand you need a certain skill level to be able to ride this board of course, but on the other hand you'll be able to experience new levels of agility and freedom thanks to the super compact and light design.

Are they for use strictly with straps when winging?

It's totally up to you. The inserts provide comfortable positions, when used with different straps setups, but you can also go for strapless sessions with the Tiny.

Talk to us about the hull design on the Tiny...

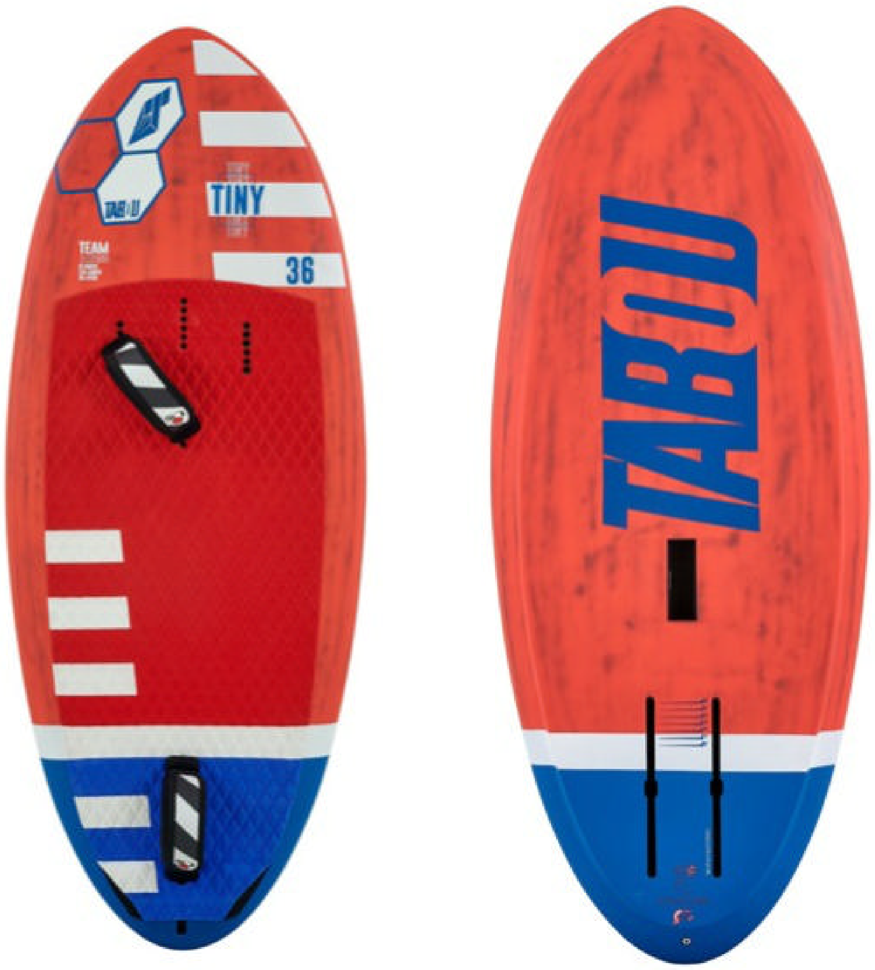
Our special rail design has the same advantage as a bevel, but the sharp edge provides improved release from the water surface. Also, with this we can implement a curvy rocker line on the rail that will help to easily pump the board for take-offs and have smooth touchdowns.

What's the feedback been like from the team?

We've been working a lot with Kaden Pritchard and other team riders with different weights on the Tiny and they are very excited about the outcome. When you look at the videos Kaden posts on social media, you see what's possible with such a board. But also Ross Williams, former PWA windsurf racer and therefore a heavier rider, rides endless waves with the bigger Tiny on the Isle of Wight. Recently, Sebastian Gux was pumping through the pool at Boot Düsseldorf and had some close attempts at pumping backflips – and this was his first session with the Tiny. So all in all the riders seem to be having a good time with the Tiny and that's what it's about.

Anything else in the pipeline from Tabou in the coming months? Your secret's safe with us (and our readers...)

We've got a range of inflatable wing boards, the iPocket, which will drop soon and make it easier to travel with your quiver. In the background we're working on many different ideas and concepts, but these we need to keep a secret from your readers until one of the next issues...



FRESH ARRIVALS

AXIS DOWNWIND & HYBRID DOWNWIND BOARDS

The downwind scene is fast becoming the big area of growth in foiling, complemented now by the release of two new downwind board lines from the team over at AXIS. We dropped the guys a line to find out about the boards, and what they're attributing all the recent downwind buzz to…

The popularity of SUP downwinding has skyrocketed in recent months. What do you attribute to its quick rise in popularity?

SUP downwinding is taking the foiling world by storm! But it didn't happen suddenly. We have been working for years towards this goal. The difference is that now, with the latest advancements in the AXIS foiling technology, it's no longer just for the elite athletes and superhumans. With wider style foils, stiffer than ever materials and longer, narrow Hawaiian-style boards, even the average person can tackle the challenge of paddling up. Of course, it's not exactly a walk in the park, but with our latest downwinding foiling equipment, it's a much more enjoyable experience. Our Power Carbon High Modulus Masts provide maximum control, and the sleek Red and Black Advance Fuselage design enhances yaw control. Combine these with the ART, PNG and HPS front wings and our higher aspect rear wings, and you have a setup that fits everyone's local conditions, and skill level. It's a thrilling new era for SUP downwinding!

Let's talk about your two SUP Downwind board product lines. Who should choose each model…

We are releasing two different DW board lines to the market for 2023.

The AXIS Hybrid carbon foilboards offer the ultimate versatility for those who want it all – it's a SUP surf foil board that lets you catch bigger waves on the open ocean with ease, but still maneuverable enough for surfing closer to the break. To downwind the Hybrid boards you need a bit more skill and technique (due to their overall shape and length/width ratio). But when you are up and going, they are so fun to ride. They are also great winging boards for all skill levels and conditions. And because of their design, they can also work perfectly in those light wind days, allowing you to take flight even in the gentlest of breezes. The AXIS Hybrid carbon foilboards do it all. Downwind, SUP foil and winging.

Downwind Boards

Hybrid Boards

The AXIS Downwind carbon foilboards are specifically designed for dedicated downwind enthusiasts. With their easier paddling experience, they are perfect for overcoming the biggest challenge of downwinding: getting up on the foil. The long skinny design provides a distinct advantage – if you ever touch down, getting back up is a breeze thanks to the reduced drag resistance of the narrow outline. And the takeoff is unparalleled due to the shape and rocket design. The AXIS Downwind carbon Foilboards are the ultimate dedicated DW boards for AXIS in 2023.

With the pure downwind model, how challenging is it to balance width and practicality?

It's still early days in the world of downwinding with an exciting challenge of balancing width and practicality. But fear not! With our 2023 AXIS Downwind carbon foilboards, the learning curve is more manageable than ever. Our extensive testing and demos have proven that with the right foil setup, it's easier than you think. The long, narrow design of the AXIS Downwind carbon foilboards allow you to paddle up with ease and efficiency, track straight and offer minimal drag resistance, making it a game-changer compared to wider, shorter conventional boards.

What are the top three pieces of advice you would give to someone just starting their downwind journey?

Embarking on your downwind journey? Here are the four key ingredients to success:
- Gear up with the right tools for the job. A big span, highly efficient wing, a super stiff mast for support, and the right board for your needs.
- Cultivate patience – downwinding takes time and practice to master. Be ready to feel like a beginner all over again.
- When things reach a plateau, seek professional coaching advice.
- Stay determined – with persistence and determination, you'll reach new heights on your downwind journey.

How can riders determine the appropriate size for their weight?

Ready to choose the perfect size for your downwind setup? Here's what you need to know:
Start with a classic rule of thumb – aim for 20L over your body weight in kilograms, when you're just starting out. As you progress and gain experience, the volume will naturally decrease, becoming closer to your body weight. The AXIS Downwind carbon foilboard in sizes 8'6/120L and 8'0/110L work really well from the beginning on. And if you are looking for a Hybrid carbon foilboard that gives you more foiling discipline versatility, then the 6'6/120L and the 6'4/110L could be great options.

The ultimate determining factor will be a combination of your own experience, including your background in SUP and foiling, and local conditions. So, don't hesitate to lean on your expertise and knowledge of your local waters to make the best choice for your downwind setup.

What materials and construction methods have you used in the board? Is minimizing weight a key factor in downwind boards?

When it comes to designing the ultimate downwind board, materials and layup are key. We put a strong focus on minimizing weight for maximum performance. Every gram counts when it comes to getting up on foil and gliding through the water.

A lightweight board is crucial, as heavier boards are harder to paddle up. The AXIS Downwind and Hybrid carbon foilboards feature a bottom construction of EPS and a single layer of carbon, while the top part of the boards and deck is a carbon sandwich. Under the EVA deck pad, there is a PVC sandwich (3mm H100 with carbon fibre on either side). This provides deck strength and stiffness, while also being optimized for lightness. However, it's important to note that these boards are designed for performance, and light weight – not durability. For example, standing on your board to take off the foil is not recommended...

Which of the many AXIS foils are best suited for downwind?

Your local conditions will determine your perfect foil match. For some, the big and bold ART wings are the way to go. For others, the user-friendly PNG range is a fantastic choice for learning and growth. And don't forget about the HPS1050, a leading performance option that has earned a reputation for delivering thrilling downwind experiences! When it comes to it, Short regular, Short and Ultrashort Advance fuselages are all great choices for the downwind setups. And it doesn't get better than the Power Carbon and Power Carbon High Modulus carbon masts to drive your downwind AXIS foil setup.

You seem to have a massive pool of riders dotted around globally – who's been keenly involved in your downwind product development?

We work with the top DW riders from all over the world. From Tahiti and Hawaii, to Australia, mainland US, and Europe so many talented individuals influence and guide daily our direction and development. It would be impossible to list them all here, but rest assured that every contribution, big or small, has played a pivotal role in making our product a huge success! ⋘

NORTH SONAR HA-SERIES

NORTH
NOVA 2.9
NORTH

Completing their Sonar high aspect range following the earlier release of the HA850 and 1050, North's HA Series is now available in a very comprehensive nine sizes. We hit up North's Brand Director Mike Raper to hear about the whole line-up…

Hi Mike. Could you give us an overview of the high aspect range, what it contains, and who should be looking to benefit from it…

I should start with a warning – the Sonar HA Wings are designed for intermediate to advanced riders in different powered foiling categories like wing, kite and towing in bigger and faster swell. Engineered for the highest speed and efficiency possible across a range of disciplines, the HA Series require minimal pump and power to generate glide.

The HA is our most efficient wing to date. With excellent lift at high speed, the HA850-HA1250 are your core wing-foiling and surf sizes. The smaller HA550-HA1050 have less planing surface and higher stall speed. They are designed to generate maximum efficiency and lift for high-speed wing foiling, racing, kite foiling and towing into large swells. The larger HA1250-HA1450 are ideal for light wind winging, bigger riders, coastal runners or stealing wakes.

Tell us about any unique features you've built into the shape?

The foil sections have been designed from a clean slate with a strong focus on maximizing laminar flow over the section; this minimizes drag, which maximizes glide and top speed while also preventing flow detachment and ventilation when tip breaching. The flow conditions at the foil's tip differ significantly from those at the root, so the foil section also changes along the span of these wings to suit the different requirements. The tapered planform minimizes resistance to turning inputs, which maximizes maneuverability for the span.

Who's responsible for your foil design?

Naval architect Uli Sommerlatt heads up our design and development team as foils Product Manager and our Foils Engineer Danyon Watchorn does all the CAD and design work. The pair make a fantastic team, both drawing from their naval backgrounds in sailing. They have much experience combined with real-world practical mold-making.

It's a very comprehensive high-aspect range. What was the thinking behind having the nine available sizes?

We made 10 different first-round test samples, and we were planning to choose around five for production, but once we started testing each iteration in some of the core sizes, I must admit our enthusiasm took over. We loved them all. We took all nine into production spaced every 100mm except for the jump from HA1250-HA1450.

How do these HA wings perform when breaching?

These wings breach extremely well – they can breach, recover and track again instantly. Recovery on sharp turns is also incredible. The custom-designed section shapes resist flow detachment, meaning the foil doesn't ventilate when a tip is breached. The flattened-off wingtips create a steeper exit angle between the foil and the water surface, which also reduces the disturbance from breaching.

Tell us about the construction and layup. How have you kept any vibration to a minimum?

The carbon fiber prepreg layup and core material have been selected to maximize stiffness, providing a direct and consistent feel and eliminating low-frequency vibration. The refined wingtips and trailing edge minimize flow-induced oscillations. This combination of streamlined shape and stiff structure provides a smooth and vibration-free ride.

Which of your stabilizers are best paired with the HA range?

We have launched the S208 stabilizer to pair with the HA range. It has been designed with faster foil sections and a more efficient shape, which help to unlock the high-speed potential of the HA front wings. We are also launching the S178 in March, which pairs with the smaller HA front wings for experienced riders looking for even higher speeds. Depending on body weight, we recommend the HA950 and below on the S178 and the HA1050 and above on the S208.

You've added some larger sizes, the 1250 and 1450, tell us more about their potential application.

Great for light wind winging and heavier riders, the larger sizes also crossover into downwind, allowing more experienced riders to foil in faster-moving ocean swells. Ocean swells move faster in the open ocean – slower in shallow water or closer to the coast. The faster you move through the water, the more you need a very efficient wing.

What sort of top speeds has the GPS been clocking on the smaller sizes?

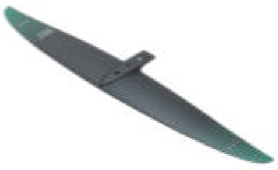
Our team rider in Fuerteventura, Gunnar Biniasch, has recorded over 37 knots on GPS with the HA550 with the 4.2 Mode wing.

The 850 and 1050 have been out for a little while already. How's the response been to those?

For winging, good. The wings are very fast, targeted to an intermediate or advanced rider who can keep their speed up in the gybe. (We're first to admit that it's not the right wing for learning how to gybe!). The 850 is more playful and responsive and has more top speed. The HA1050 has a slightly earlier lift to foil, is a bit easier to ride, has a bit more glide, and you'd also enjoy it more in lighter wind. If your winging includes big offshore rollers, the larger wing is great.

Anything else coming out of the North camp we should be looking out for?

A new 2023 Nova Wing and a sick new range of surf foils and low-speed stabs are coming. These work well for prone and wing surfing, dock starts, pumping and downwind. There is also a new 95cm mast and a smaller S178 stab, which will complement these high-speed HA Wings.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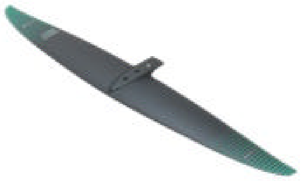

650HA

750HA

850HA

950HA

1050HA

1150HA

1250HA

1450HA

FRESH ARRIVALS

FREEWING AIR V3

FreeWing – the ongoing and successful collaborative joint partnership between brands Starboard and Airush – just released the new AIR V3. With plenty of tweaks and upgrades to their flagship wing, it was time to speak to FreeWing Product Designer John Lewis.

Hey John, so firstly please tell us what changes we're going to find in this model...

Hey team! So this model is quite the overhaul from the Air V2, making numerous steps in many areas, working really hard to ensure this wing is the perfect all-round performance wing. One of the most notable changes is the introduction of our brand new modular handle system. This will allow for changing between our new firm flex and prepreg carbon handles, giving the user complete customization as well as the possible introduction of boom systems and other exciting handle options down the line. Other more noticeable changes include the significantly tighter canopy to improve ease of use in maneuvers and responsiveness of the wing, as well as the re-engineered leading edge diameter, which reduces drag and improves the speed of the wing.

We've really tried to think of everything with this wing, working less noticeable features such as the improved seam construction allowing for significantly higher pressure in the wing and minute details such as the new window design. However, if I was to list all of them it would make for quite a long read.

You've added quite a bit of curvature to the strut this year, how does this improve the wing?

This curvature gives some separation between the front and back, and gives the wing a fantastic easy balance. It results in the wing sitting very nicely between the hands making it comfortable for extended time on the water. It also allows us to connect the back of the strut to the canopy, giving you an extremely direct connection to the wing and improving its responsiveness.

You've introduced a choice of rigid carbon handles or soft handles for this version, what do you feel the main benefits of rigid handles are?

The rigid handles offer a familiar feeling for windsurfers and kitesurfers. They give a completely fixed and therefore very direct connection to the wing. This allows riders to feel and control every minute detail of the flight of the wing as well as improving the power transfer for pumping.

How difficult was it to engineer a solid connection between a pre-preg carbon handle and inflatable surface?

We have managed to integrate a custom molded part into the inflatable surface of the wings using the vast expertise from our SUP team. This was by no means an easy feat, but with a very intense testing program, we were able to sufficiently reinforce and protect the inflatable bladders underneath and thus able to obtain a very clean looking finish with only a small plastic part extruding. This plastic part is what the handles are mounted to directly and its integration into the wind provides maximum energy transfer.

You've introduced a lot more pre-loaded canopy tension into the canopy than the previous model, tell us how this helps improve the ride?

We have found this has had a massive improvement on the wave and freestyle performance of the wing which our team riders love, whilst still maintaining excellent low-end performance, really giving the wing that all-round excellence. However, I believe the most significant benefit for most users that the pre-loaded canopy tension will provide is the wonderful stability and lift the wing carries through maneuvers when the wing is moved overhead. It makes foiling tacks a dream, as the wing works with you through the turn, lifting up to give you space to focus on the maneuver rather than getting in the way and you having to fight it round. We really believe the intermediate user will see massive benefit from this when they are learning tacks as they can prove to be a tricky maneuver.

You've developed a huge range of sizes from 2.5m through to 7m, all tailored differently to their wind speeds. Which are the most difficult sizes to develop and why?

Quite honestly the very small sizes proved most tricky to develop. Being based in Thailand, we were able to get a lot of time on the sizes 5-7m and then the European summer gave us good time on the 4-5m. But for those lower three sizes, the 2.5m, 3m and 3.5m, not only do you need a serious amount of wind to be using them but often this results in riding in extremely gusty conditions, making the analysis of the wing performance hard. We also need to think of who will actually be using those sizes – the 2.5m for example is mostly going to be used by kids and lighter women, so it is important to make sure we receive their feedback on it rather than that of an 80kg male team rider, who is only going to use it if it's 45 knots...

FREE WING
5.0 AIR

We know Starboard and Airush work collaboratively developing the FreeWing – who's been the lead developer for this model, and where has the testing been carried out?

Quite honestly, this model has been a collaborative effort from everyone at Starboard and Airush. It's such an important product for us and we have really worked to utilize all aspects of the group to ensure the product is the best it can be. Just using the handle, for example, we have drawn on expertise from our inflatable SUP department for integration knowledge as well as the SUP paddles department in order to obtain the lightest carbon on the market and our team within Airush and AK for their expertise on injection molded parts.

FREE WING
5.0 AIR

The testing again has been a group wide effort, with the team in SUP and windsurf in Thailand doing a lot of testing on the 6 and 7m, the Airush and AK team in Cape Town testing the 3.5-4m. The FreeWing dream team riders in Europe did a lot of testing on the key 4.5-5.5m sizes and the riders over in the US tested the 2.5 to 3.5m sizes in some gnarly Hood River sessions. I have been fortunate enough to be overseeing the development process for the wing, traveling to each test and drawing conclusions to improve the design from the feedback of the guys testing, but really it is a collaborative effort from all involved.

THE FUTURE OF FOILING

FORESIGHT

Titouan Galea became the most recent high-profile signing to Cabrinha's growing foil division… So, now seemed like a good time to get in touch and hear his thoughts on the directions he thinks the sport is headed.

PHOTOS **JAMES BOULDING AND PHIL SOBOLEV**

+ Foiling changed my life a couple of years ago. It allowed me to travel around the world, meet so many people and today I am making a living from it. Traveling and discovering new places is one of my favorite things now… foiling has turned so many random spots into incredible spots. It's given us a totally new vision of so many different places… you can turn a small lake in the middle of a city into a pumping playground, or a mushy, soft wave into surf foil heaven.

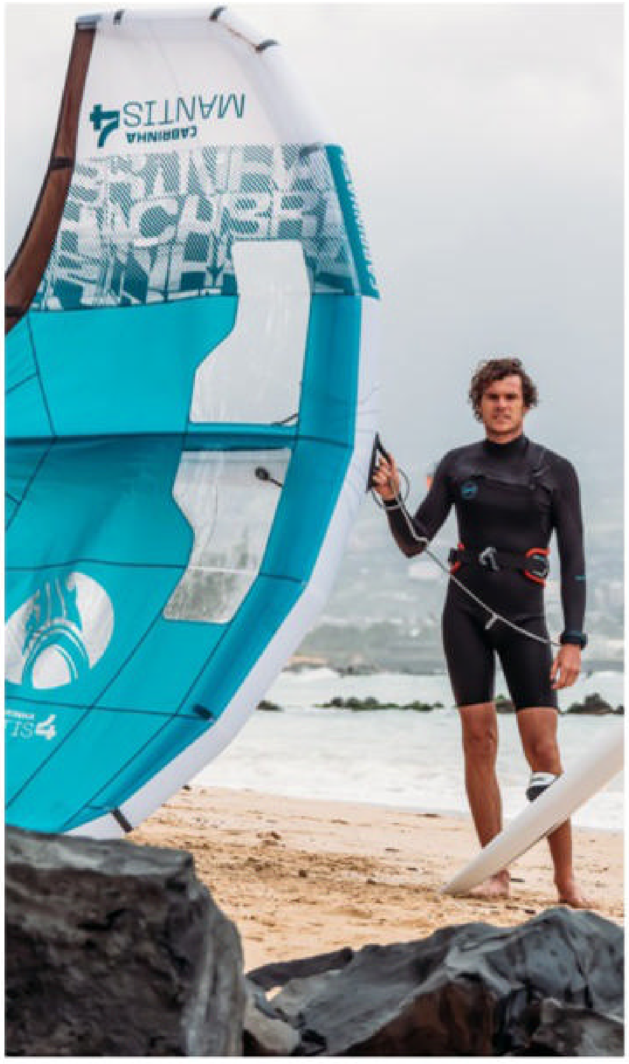
+ I think foiling is starting to be accepted by other surfers and watermen and women. Today most of the surfing legends are foiling, and there are even some spots that are 100% dedicated to foiling. People who foil come from all different kinds of backgrounds; they come from kitesurfing, windsurfing, surfing, skating… some foilers never even touched the water before. I think this is a good thing because it unites people from different communities and horizons and also mixes up the generations. You have 12-year-old kids ripping on the foil today, and last year on the five stops of the Wingfoil World Tour, two stops were won by a 15-year-old kid, and the last one by a 16-year-old!

+ Foils have evolved a lot the last few years, with so many different disciplines appearing. From e-foiling to tow foiling, today you can foil in so many different ways. But to be able to have the best gear we will need to use the best materials, with high modulus carbon and some rare metals that are expensive. But I'm sure one day someone will make a 3-meter span foil to be able to pump for hours, and we will be towing-in to 30-foot waves very comfortably, just like surfers do.

+ Few people have the opportunity to make their passion their work. Foiling is not up there with surfing yet, and only a few people can make a living from foiling. So I don't think we can call any foilers superstars yet, but I hope we will one day! It's a completely different business than it might have been 30-years-ago, such as when windsurfers were superstars and had lucrative contracts with multiple brands.

+ From what I'm seeing, the next foiling stars are going to be groms coming out of either surf foiling or wing foiling, because those are the two disciplines that are growing the fastest and have plenty of scope to grow more. Specifically, I'm thinking of kids like Malo Guenole in France, Chris McDonald in Oregon… but there are so many kids ripping that are not so well known and don't get that much exposure; especially in places like Hawaii, or French Polynesia where it's so popular.

+ Like all sports, I think the limit will keep being pushed. Today we do double backflips, and I'm sure one day someone will do three. We see riders doing 360s, floaters, barrels, backflips… and I have no doubt that one day someone will do all those maneuvers on one wave, just like in surfing.


CABRINHA
MANTIS 4

CABRINHA

STATE OF PLAY

MAX ROBINSON

GWA TOUR UPDATE

Diputación de Cádiz
TARIFA
TARIFA WING PRO
GWA WORLD TOUR
2022 OC TO 15TH
IBO BEA E TARIFA

Photo: Samuel Cardenas / GWA

A slightly different State of Play this issue, as we hear from Max Robinson, a member of Slingshot's Wing Team, an athlete on the Global Wingfoil Association (GWA) Wingfoil World Tour, but also a member of the GWA Riders Committee, playing a key role in the the general rules but also the direction of the GWA competitive tour. Here, he lays out the recent changes, and what athletes can expect as they head into a busy contest schedule for 2023…

WORDS **ERIC DURAN (UNLESS SPECIFIED)**

As the sport of wingfoiling continues to gain popularity, so does our World Tour, with a jam-packed schedule of 13 events planned for this year. Get ready for an exciting season filled with thrilling wingfoiling action...

RIDERS COMMITTEE AND PLANS FOR THIS SEASON

The GWA Riders Committee is composed of six elite athletes from the tour who collaborate with the main organizers and judges of the GWA Tour. Together, we aim to determine the direction of the sport by assisting in the establishment of rules for various disciplines, such as Wave, Surf-Freestyle, Surf Slalom, and Big Air. Additionally, we provide feedback on past events to help make necessary improvements and ensure that the tour is as successful as possible.

An example of a change that we helped facilitate would be the introduction to the 'trick by trick' format that was introduced in Tarifa. We wanted to use a format where the judging for each rider would be as fair as possible and with the original format, we were finding issues with riders doing tricks at the same time during their heats and the judges not being able to score the riders properly. This was especially an issue during round one, when there were three athletes competing in the same heat. The 'trick by trick' format gave a rider 20 seconds to perform a trick and a 10 second break for the judges to give scores. This would then repeat for each rider until the end of the heat duration, giving each rider seven attempts at tricks with their top three tricks counting. At first there were a few riders who thought that this format would affect the flow of their heats but once the competition was underway, the format showed a noticeable improvement for the judges to fairly score each heat. This led to positive feedback on the format from most riders after the event.

QUALIFICATION CHANGES: THE BIG CHANGE FOR NEXT SEASON

One big change we are making for this coming season is limiting the number of athletes that can enter each Surf-Freestyle event, from 48 down to 32. This will mean that events will be more likely to finish (as wind is not always reliable) and the quality of the riders at each event will be higher. This will create a better experience for the audience and increase the chances of media coverage, including live streaming opportunities, which will help to expand the reach and popularity of the sport.

For riders who have never entered a tour event and are wondering how to do so, the new ‘Qualifying Series’ as well as ‘Video Entries’ are the new pathway. The Qualifying Series are events throughout the year that any wingfoil riders can attend. Each rider’s top two Qualifying Series events will be scored towards their Qualifying Series ranking. The current top five riders in the Qualifying Series for Surf-Freestyle are given a spot in the next upcoming GWA event.

The Video Entries are an accumulation of moves done by an individual athlete put together on video and sent to the GWA judges and organizers to be voted on for whose moves are the most impressive amongst the videos sent in. The current top four riders that they determine to have the most impressive moves on video will also be given a spot at the next GWA event.

Therefore, the 32 athletes at each event will be filled out as follows:
20: Current top 20 GWA athletes
5: Top 5 Qualifying Series athletes
4: Top 4 video entries
2: Local athletes picked by each event organizers
1: Athlete picked by the GWA

With the ‘Qualifying Series’ and ‘Video Entries’ creating space for nine out of the 32 seeds at each event, this gives a strong opportunity to those looking to try and take part on the GWA Wingfoil World Tour as the sport continues to grow.

Photo: Samuel Cardenas / GWA

NEW DISCIPLINES

Wave

Another change is the introduction of two new disciplines, Wave and Big Air. There are four wave events scheduled for this next season with the first being in Cape Verde. The new wave discipline will only score wave rides and moves made on the wave face. The wave winging category will attract a new class of surf-focused riders and the format itself will likely be more relevant to the general wingfoil public who love to ride swell. Wingfoiling has created an opportunity for people to ride waves, locations and conditions that many would normally deem unrideable if they were just surfing. There are a lot of wingers out there starting to push their limits in regard to their swell and wave riding abilities. We believe that foiling in waves can be such a spectacle that it deserves to be showcased on the World Tour in a way that is relatable to the public as much as possible and inspires those who love the sport for its glide and surf feeling. I am extremely excited to see the riders push the limits of what wingfoilers can do in the radical conditions that we should see in this year's expanded tour. Last year in Taiba, Brazil we experienced a powerful shorebreak that many people had difficulty with, but it also served to showcase what wingfoilers are capable of and I can't wait to see more!

Big Air

The other addition to the tour will be a Big Air event that will take place in Gran Canaria during the summer where there is very strong wind and waves which will allow the riders to log some serious airtime and make for some epic highlight reels. I think all the riders love doing massive stock airs when they are freeriding, but it will be great to see them really concentrating on going big and see how the equipment develops to allow for riders to take themselves into the stratosphere.

OTHER CHANGES TO EXISTING FORMATS

Another exciting change is the addition of new concepts to the already existing disciplines of Surf-Slalom and Surf Freestyle. In the last GWA Riders Committee meeting we discussed ways to make Surf-Slalom more exciting to watch and try to move it away from just being a drag race between the riders who have the fastest foils. To accomplish this we plan to implement a maximum reach length (the distance an athlete travels from one mark to the next), as well as making courses that cause competitors to make multiple tacks and jibes which will put more emphasis on foil and wing handling rather than straight line speed. This new format should be much more exciting for spectators with multiple lead changes.

WHAT'S NEXT...

As the sport continues to evolve and the level of competition increases, we are seeing more and more riders taking the sport seriously. One of the biggest changes is the increased commitment to training required to secure a spot in the top 32 riders for the next event. This requires a lot of dedication and is a natural progression as the sport becomes more prominent on the world stage. It is exciting to be a part of this process as a member of the Riders Committee and a GWA rider, and to witness this evolution firsthand. From athletes like Balz Muller, who is a multi-windsport athlete constantly pushing the boundaries with new tricks, to the young riders pushing the sport harder and attempting stunts that were once thought impossible. I look forward to seeing the first 1080 as well as the first double backflip, and any other groundbreaking moves that may be attempted in competitions in the coming months.

OZONE

FLY V1

02 FLY V1
OZONE

The Fly V1 is an intermediate wing that is also perfectly accessible for those new to this sport. We took a modern design approach for the young and rapidly evolving wing market. Keeping things clean and simple the Fly is lightweight, quick to set up and easy to use. It is designed to make learning and advancing into wing propelled sports as easy and efficient as possible.

Sizes: 2m 3m 4m 5m 6m 7m

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